A

SECOND LETTER

TO THE

AUTHOR

OF THE

CONFESSIONAL:

CONTAINING

REMARKS

ON THE

FIVE FIRST CHAPTERS of that BOOK.

LONDON:

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M.DCC.LXVIII.

MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

ERRATA.

Page 2, Line 19, after *And* add *he.*
40, l. 7, for *inſtruments* read *intereſts.*
68, l. 23, dele *and the people's conſciences.*
71, l. 22, for *unſeaſonable* r. *unreaſonable.*
72, l. 10, after *one* r. *church.*
73, l. 18, for *ordinate* r. *co-ordinate.*
ibid. l. 23, for *and* r. *if not.*
76, l. 26, after *unalterable* add *He ſaith.*
82, l. 14, after *only* inſert *imply.*
105, l. penult. for *too* r. *two.*
134, at bottom, for *Eng.* r. *Enq.*
142, l. 8, for *principle* r. *principal.*
149, l. 29, for *need* r. *needed.*
155, l. 14, before *another* inſert *one.*
162, l. 29, for *agreeble* r. *agreeable.*
168, l. 27, for *point* r. *points.*
173, l. 1, for *deſpiſed* r. *deſpiſe.*
174, l. 14, for *friend* r. *friends.*
188, l. 13, for *text* r. *leaſt.*

A

SECOND LETTER

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REVEREND SIR,

I Now wait on you, according to promiſe, to inquire whether ſubſcription to articles of religion, and the eſtabliſhment of confeſſions of faith and doctrine, in proteſtant churches, be juſtifiable or not.

CHAP. I. You ſay it is not; becauſe, in ſo doing, the proteſtants forſook their own principles. And, to prove this point, you lay down, according to your fancy, *ſuch principles as* you ſay *they went upon when they firſt withdrew from the communion of the church of Rome.* I ſay, *according to your fancy*, becauſe you have not informed us in what books of theirs ſuch principles are declared, nor do I know where to find them. According to their known principles, as publiſhed in their writings, ſuch eſtabliſhment is not only juſtifiable,

but neceſſary. But I deſire no more credit to be given to my aſſertions, without proof, than repeted experience has taught me is due to yours. This being laid as the corner-ſtone in your building, I ſhall pay the greater attention to it.

The proteſtant principles, from which you would prove the unjuſtifiableneſs of eſtabliſhed confeſſions of faith and articles of religion, are thus deſcribed by you: *Jeſus Chriſt hath, by his goſpel, called all men unto liberty, the glorious liberty of the ſons of God.*[a] I no where find that the firſt proteſtants underſtood this *glorious liberty* to mean a diſcharge from all human authority in matters of religion. Luther, in his treatiſe on *Chriſtian liberty*, in 1520, obſerves, that, 'there are many who abuſe this liberty, 'thinking they are hereby diſcharged from all 'reſtraint, and aſſert their Chriſtian freedom in 'nothing but in their contempt of human cere-'monies and ordinances.' And tells us, 'that the 'free Chriſtian obſerves human injunctions, not 'indeed as neceſſary to ſalvation, but in obedi-'ence to eccleſiaſtical governours, the ſociety of 'which he is a member, or the magiſtrate under 'whom he lives, or as an example to his neigh-'bour.'[b] Calvin, in his *Inſtitutions*, complains, 'that ſeditious men and cavillers miſrepreſent this 'liberty,

[a] Confeſſ. chap. I. pag. 1.

[b] Sunt quam plurimi, qui hanc libertatem fidei audientes, mox eam in occaſionem carnis vertant, omnia ſibi ſtatim licere arbitrantes, nec aliâ re ullâ liberi et Chriſtiani videri volentes, quam contemptu et reprehenſione ceremoniarum, traditionum, legum humanarum. And juſt above—Chriſtianus enim liber ſic dicet; Ego jejunabo, orabo, hoc et hoc faciam, quod per homines mandatum eſt; non quod illo mihi ſit opus ad juſtitiam aut ſalutem, ſed quod in hoc morem geram papæ, epiſcopo, communitati illi, et illi magiſtratui, aut proximo meo ad exemplum faciam. — Seckend lib. i. ſect. 27. §. LXIIX. pag. 101.

'liberty, as if all obedience to men were taken 'away by it:' but he ſubjects us both to their political and ſpiritual government. 'The firſt,' he ſays, 'is the appointment of God: the latter 'alſo muſt be obeyed in its external diſcipline 'and ceremonies, founded on that general ſcrip-'ture rule, *Let all things be done decently and in 'order:*' which diſcipline is alterable according 'to the circumſtances of times and places. Now 'it is the duty of Chriſtian people, ſays he, to 'keep human conſtitutions framed according to 'this rule, with a free conſcience indeed, and 'without ſuperſtition: yet with a pious readineſs 'to obey. Not to deſpiſe them, not to paſs them 'over with a careleſs negligence: much leſs 'ought they by pride and obſtinacy openly to 'break them.'[d] Our own church, it is well known, when ſhe aſſerted her liberty againſt the uſurpations and tyranny of Rome, ſubmitted herſelf, in externals, to the ſupremacy of her chief magiſtrate, whom the nation, by common conſent in parliament, 'reſtored to all ſuch

 'juriſdictions,

[c] 1 Cor. xiv. 40.

[d] Statim enim atque de humanarum conſtitutionum abrogatione verbum factum eſt, ingentes turbæ partim à ſeditioſis, partim à calumniatoribus, commoventur: quaſi univerſa ſimul tollatur ac ſubvertatur hominum obedientia. Lib. iii. cap. xix. §. 14. Primum advertamus duplex eſſe in homine regimen: alterum ſpirituale, . . . alterum politicum. §. 15. Magiſtratuum functionem non modo ſibi probari acceptamque eſſe teſtatus eſt Dominus: ſed honorificentiſſimis inſuper elogiis ejus dignitatem proſequutus mirificè nobis commendavit. Lib. iv. cap. xx. §. 4. Eas demum humanas conſtitutiones me probare quæ et Dei authoritate fundatæ, et ex ſcriptura deſumptæ, adeòque prorſus divinæ ſunt . . . . quia autem in externâ diſciplinâ et cæremoniis non voluit (Dominus) ſigillatim præſcribere quid ſequi debeamus, (quòd iſtud pendere à temporum conditione prævideret, neque judicaret unam ſeculis omnibus formam convenire) confugere

'jurisdictions, privileges, superiorities, and pre-'eminences, spiritual or ecclesiastical, as by any 'ecclesiastical power or authority formerly had 'been, or might be lawfully exercised for visita-'tion of the ecclesiastical state and persons, and 'for reformation, order, and correction of the 'same and all manner of errors, heresies, schisms, 'abuses, offences, contempts, and enormities. 'They also gave her power over ceremonies in the 'worship of God, by advice of her commission-'ers or metropolitan.'[e] This proves the consent of the chief protestant churches, that the gospel liberty did not set us loose from all human authority in matters of religion.

Another protestant principle you represent to be, a being *restored to the privilege of working out their own salvation, by their own understanding and endeavours.* And *for this work of salvation sufficient means are afforded in the holy scriptures, without having recourse to the doctrines and commandments of men.*[f] That no man hath authority to make new articles of faith unknown to scripture, and to bind them upon us as necessary terms of salvation, is true; and was the very point on which the protestants broke with the church of Rome. Nor had you the least need to specify, as a principle of the *first* protestants, what is a principle of *all* protestants *now*, and very consistent with their use of articles

fugere hìc oportet ad generales quas dedit regulas, ut ad eas exigantur quæcunque ad ordinem et decorum præcipi necessitas ecclesiæ postulabit. Lib. iv. cap. x. §. 30. . . . Jam verò Christiani populi officium est, quæ secundum hunc canonem fuerint instituta, liberâ quidem conscientiâ, nullâque superstitione, piâ tamen et facili ad obsequendum propensione servare, non contemptim habere, non supinâ negligentiâ præterire: tantum abest ut per fastum et contumaciam violare apertè debeat. §. 31.

[e] 1mo Elis. [f] Confess. p. 1.

articles and confeſſions. This therefore gives ſome ground for ſuſpicion, that you would repreſent the reformers as renouncing all regard and deference to the doctrine and judgment of the Chriſtian church and its miniſters: The contrary of which is true. Luther ſays, that 'ordinarily certain perſons ſhould be ſet apart 'to teach, and to adminiſter the ſacraments; 'the unlearned are to be inſtructed by catechiſms and abridgments of ſcripture doctrine; the learned ſhould ſubmit their interpretations of ſcripture to be examined whether they 'agree with both Teſtaments, the ancient creeds, 'and certain evidences of what was held by the 'apoſtles.'[g] And Calvin, on Epheſ. iv. 11, 12, 13. obſerves, 'that God, who could perfect his children at once, hath rather willed 'that they ſhould grow and increaſe by the bringing up of the church; and hath committed the 'preaching of his heavenly doctrine to paſtors in 'it; and obliges the people to ſubmit themſelves 'with a meek and teachable diſpoſition, to be 'guided by teachers ordained for this purpoſe. '... And as of old he not only gave the law, 'but added interpreters of it, at whoſe lips the 'people were to ſeek the true meaning of it: ſo

[g] Ad docendum verbum Dei et ad adminiſtranda ſacramenta certos viros conſtitui debere. Vide Seckend. lib. i. ſect. 45. §. CIII. p. 170. —— Neminem quidem ad fidem cogi debere, attamen plebem rudem notitiâ neceſſariâ religionis imbuendam eſſe. In præfatione (ad catechiſmum) plebis ignorantiam deplorat, et epiſcopos acriter increpat, quod inſtitutionem catecheticam neglexerint. Lib. ii. ſect. 17, §. LI. p. 145, A. D. 1529 —— Videndum eſt igitur, utra interpretatio, noſtra an contraria, congruat cum fontibus, hoc eſt, cum ſcriptis propheticis et apoſtolicis, ſymbolis, et certis teſtimoniis apoſtolicæ ſententiæ. Lib. iii. ſect. 33. §. 130. p. 609. A. D. 1546.

'now he not only wills us to *give attendance to reading*, but hath ſet over us maſters, by whoſe labors we may be aſſiſted. . . . . God's grace indeed is not tied to outward means; but we are tied to expect it by the ordinary mean of preaching; which while ſome fanatical men refuſe, they intangle themſelves in many hurtful ſnares. Pride, diſdain, envy, drive ſome to perſuade themſelves, that they can ſufficiently profit by private reading and meditation, and therefore deſpiſe the publick aſſemblies, and judge the office of preaching ſuperfluous. Such men, breaking the bond of union, as much as in them lies, fall under the puniſhment of ſchiſm, by ſeducing themſelves into dangerous errors.'[h] The ſenſe of our own church appears, not only in her articles, but in that previous abridgment of doctrines which ſhe publiſhed in the infancy

[h] Scribit Paulus Chriſtum, ut impleret omnia, dediſſe alios quidem apoſtolos, &c. Videmus ut Deus qui poſſet momento ſuos perficere, nolit tamen eos adoleſcere in virilem ætatem niſi educatione eccleſiæ. Videmus modum exprimi: quia paſtoribus injuncta eſt cœleſtis doctrinæ prædicatio. Videmus omnes ad unum cogi in eundem ordinem, ut manſueto et docili ſpiritu regendos ſe doctoribus in hunc uſum creatis permittant ... Sicut olim non contentus fuit ſolâ lege ſed ſacerdotes addidit interpretes, ex quorum labiis populus inquireret verum illius ſenſum: ita hodiè, non tantum vult nos eſſe lectioni attentos, ſed magiſtros etiam præficit, quorum operâ adjuvemur .... Etſi externis mediis alligata non eſt Dei virtus, nos tamen ordinario docendi modo alligavit: quem dum recuſant tenere fanatici homines, multis ſe exitialibus laqueis involvunt. Multos impellit vel ſuperbia, vel faſtidium, vel æmulatio, ut ſibi perſuadeant privatim legendo et meditando ſe poſſe ſatis proficere, atque ita contemnunt publicos cœtus, et prædicationem ſupervacuam ducant. Quoniam autem ſacrum unitatis vinculum quantum in ſe eſt ſolvunt vel abrumpunt, nemo juſtam impii hujus divortii pœnam effugit, quin ſe peſtiferis erroribus ac teterrimis deliriis faſcinet. Calvini Inſtitut. lib. IV. cap. 1. §. 5.

infancy of her reformation, called the *pia et catholica hominis Chriſtiani inſtitutio.* 'Theſe 'ſpeaking of biſhops, prieſts, and other miniſ-'ters of the church) are our ſpiritual fathers, by 'whoſe labors the people are begotten unto God 'by the goſpel. Theſe take on them the care 'of ſouls, and are appointed by God to admi-'niſter the holy ſacraments, and to feed the peo-'ple by the doctrine of the word.'[1] Thus we ſee, according to theſe three principal roots of proteſtantiſm, the holy ſcriptures do not afford ſufficient means for the work of ſalvation, without having recourſe to the doctrines and commandments of men, in a proper ſenſe, though not in that which our Saviour condemns. They are indeed originally the doctrines and commandments of Chriſt, and are to be received as ſuch; but they are to be made known, explaned, and enforced by the miniſtry of men, whom Chriſt appointed, in his apoſtles, to teach their diſciples *all things whatſoever he hath commanded*;[*] and they, in conſequence of his appointment, provided for a ſucceſſion of teachers to the world's end. And when all things that Chriſt commanded were committed to writing, interpreters would be neceſſary to thoſe who were ſtrangers to the language in which they were firſt written; and when tranſlated, expoſitors would be neceſſary to ſuch as are not ſufficiently acquainted with figures

[1] Nam hi ſunt [de epiſcopis, preſbyteris, et miniſtris eccleſiæ loquitur] ſpirituales patres, quorum operâ per evangelium populus Deo generatur. Et hi curam animarum ſuſceperunt, atque à Deo conſtituti ſunt, ut divina ſacramenta exhibeant, populumque verbi doctrinâ paſcant. —— Pia et catholica Chriſtiani hominis Inſtitutio, ad quintum præceptum decalogi.

[*] Matth. xxviii. 20.

in writing, the cuſtoms and hiſtories referred to and the agreement or analogy of ſcripture.

In theſe ſcriptures, as you procede, *all things needful for ſpiritual living and man's ſoul's health are mentioned and ſhewed: conſequently, faith and conſcience, having no dependence upon man's laws, are not to be compelled by man's authority; and none other hath the church of Rome to ſhew for the ſpiritual dominion ſhe claimeth.*[1] But I fear your doctrine, that every man has a right to interpret what is needful for man's ſoul's health, without any dependence on other mens aſſiſtance for the direction of his faith and conſcience, will juſtify the church of Rome in her claim of ſpiritual dominion, which ſhe pretends to derive from ſcripture. The proteſtants, who denied this dominion, denied her interpretation of ſcripture to be the true one, on which ſhe built it. They not only foreſaw, but experienced, that ignorance, or obſtinacy, or wrong affections, influenced men to interpret the divine word variouſly and falſely; ſometimes in points wherein man's ſoul's health was at ſtake, as well as in others, which, however uſeful, yet were not ſo needful. In remedy of this, they did not lay it down as a principle, that human authority was not to be admitted as a guide to underſtand the ſcriptures, and ſo remotely to influence faith and conſcience: but Luther, as Seckendorf relates, taught, that 'doctrines neceſſary to ſalvation ſhould be certain 'and determinate out of the ſcriptures; ſo that 'every heretical ſenſe erroneouſly introduced may 'be confuted by ſcripture itſelf, as oft as men of 'learning and piety, laying aſide prejudice, and 'imploring the divine aſſiſtance, compare and 'weigh

[1] Confeſſ. p. 1, 2.

'weigh the paſſages.'[m] They likewiſe, in their proteſtation in the colloquy at Ratiſbone, defer to the three creeds, of the apoſtles, Nice, and Athanaſius, as epitomes or ſummaries of the goſpels; to the four firſt general councils, and others, ſo far as their decrees are confirmed by ſcripture; and to the ancient eccleſiaſtical writers, ſo far as they themſelves deſire to be received, which is no further than they produce the teſtimony of ſcripture.[n] Calvin, ſpeaking of the ſpiritual power which is proper to the church, ſays, 'it conſiſts 'either in doctrine, or in juriſdiction, or in ma-'king of laws. Doctrine hath two parts, the 'authority to teach articles of doctrine, and the 'expounding of them. . . . If there happen 'debate about any doctrine, we do willingly 'grant, there is no better, no ſurer remedy, than 'if a ſynod of true biſhops aſſemble together, 'where the doctrine in controverſy may be diſ-'cuſſed: for ſuch a determination, whereunto 'the paſtors of the church ſhall agree in common 'together, calling upon the ſpirit of Chriſt, ſhall have

[m] Veriſſimum enim eſt quod vir ſummus hic inculcat, dogmata, quæ ad ſalutem neceſſaria ſunt, ex ſcripturis ſacris certa eſſe debere, ita quidem, ut hereticus ſenſus, ſcripturæ per errorem illatus, ex ipſa ſcriptura confutari poſſit et debeat, quotieſcunque pii doctores, poſitis prejudiciis, et invocato Dei auxilio, dicta conferunt et examinant. Lib. iii. ſect. 7. §. xx. p. 54.

[n] Secundo, amplectimur quoque, tanquam ſcripturæ propheticæ ac apoſtolicæ epitomen ſeu ſummam, ſymbola tria, ut apoſtolorum, Nicenum, et Athanaſianum. Tertio, amplectimur item quatuor magna concilia, Nicenum, Conſtantinopolitanum, Epheſinum, et Chalcedonenſe, et alia, quatenus quidem cum ſacrâ ſcripturâ conveniunt, et quorum dogmata et decreta ſcripturis ſacris confirmata ſunt. Quarto, agnoſcimus ſcriptores veteres eccleſiaſticos, ſed quatenus ipſi agnoſci et legi volunt, et ſententia eorum teſtimonium habet ſcripturæ. Seckend. lib. iii. ſect. 35. §. cxxxii. p. 631.

'have much greater force, than if every one ſe-
'verally ſhould conceive it at home, or ſo teach
'it to the people. Again, when biſhops are ga-
'thered together, they do the more commodiouſly
'take advice in common, what, and in what
'form, they ought to teach, leſt diverſity ſhould
'breed offence. . . . If any man trouble the
'church with an unwonted doctrine, and the mat-
'ter procedes ſo far that there be peril of greater
'diſſenſion, the church ſhould firſt meet toge-
'ther, and examine the queſtion propounded:
'at laſt, after juſt diſcuſſing had, bring forth a
'determination taken out of the ſcriptures, ſuch
'as may both take away doubting from the peo-
'ple, and ſtop the mouths of the wicked. So
'when Arius was riſen, the Nicene ſynod was ga-
'thered together, which, by its authority, both
'broke the wicked endeavours of that ungodly
'man, and reſtored peace to the church, which
'he had vexed, and defended the eternal God-
'head of Chriſt againſt his blaſphemous doctrine.
'. . . The old ſynods of Nice, Conſtanti-
'nople, the firſt of Epheſus, Chalcedon, and
'ſuch others which were holden for confuting of
'errors, we willingly embrace and reverence, ſo
'much as belongeth to the doctrines of faith[o].'

Which

[o] De ſpirituali tantùm poteſtate loquor, quæ propria eſt eccleſiæ. Ea autem conſiſtit vel in doctrinâ, vel in juriſdictione, vel in legibus ferendis. Locus de doctrinâ duas habet partes, authoritatem dogmatum tradendorum, et eorum explicationem. Calvin. inſtit. lib. IV. cap. VIII. §. 1. . . . Nos certè libenter concedimus, ſi quo de dogmate incidat diſceptatio, nullum eſſe nec melius nec certius remedium, quam ſi verorum epiſcoporum ſynodus conveniat, ubi contraverſum dogma excutiatur. Multo enim plus ponderis habebit ejuſmodi definitio in quam communiter eccleſiarum paſtores, invocato Chriſti ſpiritu, conſenſerint, quàm ſi quiſque ſeorſum domi conceptam populo traderet, vel

pauci

Which appears to have been the ſenſe of our own church too, not only in her articles, but alſo much earlier, in the preface to *The Inſtitution of a Chriſtian Man.* 'What a face would our church 'hereafter wear, ſays the writer of it, were men to 'go on raſhly to determine out of their own fancies 'the moſt important doctrines and articles of 'faith, and worry one another with their contro-'verſies? . . . To drive which plague a-'way from this kingdom, our renowned king '(Hen. VIII.) thought proper to conſult with 'ſome men of learning and integrity, whom he 'called together for that purpoſe, about framing 'a compendium of Chriſtian inſtitution, which 'ſhould contain the doctrine neceſſary to inſtruct 'the people in true piety and the law of God, 'and ſo clearly explane certain articles, at this 'time in controverſy, that all men may ſee plainly 'what points are true and agreeable to the ge-'neral faith of the church.'[p] Still neither Luther,

pauci homines privatim eam conficerent. Deinde ubi collecti in unum ſunt epiſcopi, commodius in commune deliberant quid ſibi et quâ formâ docendum ſit, ne diverſitas offendiculum pariat .... atque ita nos ipſe pietatis ſenſus inſtituit, ut ſi quis turbet eccleſiam dogmate inuſitato, atque eò res perveniat ut ſit periculum à graviore diſſidio, conveniant primùm eccleſiæ: quæſtionem propoſitam examinent: demum, juſtâ diſcuſſione habitâ, definitionem ex ſcripturâ ſumptam proferant, quæ et dubitationem in plebe tollat, et os obſtruat improbis et cupidis hominibus, ne pergere amplius audeant. Sic exorto Arrio coacta eſt Nicena ſynodus, quæ ſuâ authoritate et ſceleratos impii hominis conatus fregit, et pacem reſtituit eccleſiis quas vexaverat, et æternam Chriſti divinitatem contra ſacrilegum ejus dogma aſſeruit. Calvin. inſt. cap. IX. §. 13.

[p] Qualis enim futura eſſet eccleſiæ facies, ſi pergerent homines de graviſſimis fidei dogmatibus atque articulis ex ſuo cerebro temerè pronunciare, et mutuis ſe concertationibus agitare ac laceſſere? —— quam peſtem ab hâc republicâ

ther, nor Calvin, nor our own reformers, meant, nor do we mean, that men ſhould believe their teachers, whether ſeparate or aſſembled, ſince both are fallible, contrary to what appears to them, on the beſt uſe of their own underſtanding, with all helps, to be the dictate of reaſon or ſcripture: but only that they ſhould impartially and carefully attend to the informations, and allow a juſt weight to the learning and judgment, of thoſe whom Providence hath ſet over them.

Laſtly, you ſay, *the church of Chriſt is congregated by the word of God, and not by man's law; nor are the king's laws any farther to be obeyed than they agree with the law of God.*[q] Their principles were, that princes ſhould have a particular care of the publick worſhip of God; that their commands in general are to be obeyed; but if their commands are contrary to the commands of God, we muſt obey God rather than man: yet, as private Chriſtians, we muſt ſubmit to the unjuſt ſeverities or puniſhments they inflict.[r] The doctrine

licâ et regno ſuo clariſſimus rex noſter depellere atque arcere cogitans, accitis nuper aliquot eruditis viris, et de quorum integritate ipſius majeſtas optimam opinionem conceperat, cum his conſilium conferre dignatus eſt, de ejuſmodi Chriſtianæ inſtitutionis formâ compendio perſtringendâ, quæ neceſſariam ad erudiendum vulgus in verâ pietate et Dei lege doctrinam contineret, et articulos quoſdam, de quibus hoc ſæculo contentiones exiſtere cœperunt, ita dilucidè explicaret, ut quid in ejuſmodi controverſiis verum ſyncerumque eſſet, quid catholicæ fidei conſentaneum ac pro certo tenendum, univerſi perſpicerent ac clarè intelligerent. ——Pia et catholica Chriſtiani hominis inſtitutio. Præfat. p. 3.

[q] Confeſſ. p. 2.

[r] Omnes etiam Chriſtiani gladio ſeculari ex charitatis et ſpiritûs directione lubentiſſimè obſequuntur. . . . Si tibi princeps injungat, ut papæ obedias, atque hoc vel illud credas, libros tradas, &c. ita reſpondeas: Parebo ratione corporis et bonorum; impera pro jure quod habes in terris, obſequar: ſed

trine of the church of England is ſeen in her 37th article.

Such were the principles of the firſt proteſtant churches, by their own expreſs teſtimony; with which, confeſſions of faith, and articles of religion, are not only very conſiſtent, but thoſe principles directly led to the eſtabliſhment of them. Diverſity of opinions, they experienced, did then divide the church; and they never dreamed of remedying this evil by leaving private Chriſtians without publick guidance, to interpret ſcripture as

ſed non parebo ſi credere aut libros tradere jubes, ſic enim tyrannicè imperas quæ jure imperare non potes. Si verò tibi ſic reſpondenti bona tua auferat, aut pœnâ te afficiat ob inobedientiam, beatus es: gratias age Deo, quod dignum te fecerit ad patiendum pro verbo ejus: perfer inſani illius ſævitiam, habebit judicem ſuum. Luther. de ſeculari poteſtate: vide Seckend. lib. I. ſect. 52. §. cxxvii. p. 211, 212. Et Calvinus in inſtitut. lib. IV. cap. xx. de politicâ adminiſtratione agit.—Cujus uſus . . . non huc ſpectat duntaxat, ut ſpirent homines, edant, bibant, foveantur . . . . . ſed né idolòlatria, ne in Dei nomen ſacrilegia, ne adverſus ejus veritatem blaſphemiæ, aliæque religionis offenſiones publicè emergant ac in populum ſpargantur . . . denique ut inter Chriſtianos publica religionis facies exiſtat. . . §. 3. — Nobis autem interim ſummoperè cavendum, ne illam plenam venerandæ majeſtatis magiſtratuum authoritatem, quam Deus graviſſimis edictis ſanxit, etiamſi etiam apud indigniſſimos reſideat, atqui eam ſuâ nequitiâ, quantum in ſe eſt, polluunt, ſpernamus aut violemus. Neque enim, ſi ultio Domini eſt effrenatæ dominationis correctio, ideò protinus demandatum nobis arbitremur: quibus nullum aliud quam parendi et patiendi datum eſt mandatum. De privatis hominibus ſemper loquor. §. 31. — Adverſus ipſum (Deum) ſi quid imperent, nullo ſit nec loco nec numero: neque hìc totam illam quâ magiſtratus pollent dignitatem quicquam moremur. . . . Scio quantum et quam præſens huic conſtantiæ periculum immineat . . . ſed . . . obediendum Deo potius quam hominibus, hâc nos cogitatione conſolemur, illam tum nos præſtare quam Dominus exigit obedientiam, dum *quidvis perpetimur* potius quam à pietate deflectamus. §. 32.

as they pleaſed, and publiſh their ſingularities to the world. Their rule was to call the learned and moſt exerciſed in the ſcriptures together, to confer on the diſputed points. Where the blindneſs of individuals might receive aſſiſtance from others, and their reſpective peculiarities and prejudices be rubbed off by the amicable colliſion of debate, and the point be determined by the authority of ſcripture only: but if they differ'd about the ſenſe of that, the interpretation of the church, preſerved in her creeds univerſally embraced; the ancient general councils, ſo far as they were received; and the conſent of the primitive doctors in agreement with them, were to decide. By theſe means they not only hoped to prevent *frequent occaſions of offence among themſelves, not without ſome advantage to the common adverſary*; but alſo to direct the ſerious enquirer, in the diverſity of opinions which then divided Chriſtendom, in what communion it would be ſafeſt for him to reſt his faith and conſcience.

You ſeem to wiſh that other means had been tried, which *might have kept the terms of communion ſufficiently open for pious and reaſonable Chriſtians of very different opinions to have complied with them, without abridging their Chriſtian liberty, or doing violence to their conſciences.*[1] As we do not know who thoſe *pious and reaſonable Chriſtians* were who refuſed to comply with the terms of proteſtant communion: whether they were not ſuch, who, had they been aſked their own opinion of themſelves, would have told us they were *pious Chriſtians*, although they refuſed to worſhip their God and Saviour; and *reaſonable*, becauſe they refuſed to give credit even to divine revelation, if it did not ſquare with their prejudices; we cannot poſſibly ſay whether

[1] Confeſſ. p. 2.

ther they were ſuch, as the terms of communion ought to have been opened wider to receive, or not: And as you are not obliging enough to acquaint us what thoſe means were which you ſeem to wiſh had rather been tried; neither *can determine now whether they would have prevented very ill conſequences*; nor give us any encouragement, were they communicated, to try them, as you tell us *the diſtemper is too far gone to be cured*; we may be the leſs concerned at your unkindneſs in ſuppreſſing them. Yet, after all, they did admit to their communion (*pious* and *reaſonable* Chriſtians I charitably hope they were, yet certainly) Chriſtians of very different opinions. They excluded thoſe who impoſed articles of faith as neceſſary to ſalvation, which were not contained in ſcripture: this kept out papiſts, who maintained that the pope's decrees and laws were of equal authority with ſcripture; and the irregular enthuſiaſts, who pretended to oblige conſcience by ſecret divine revelations. They alſo, after judging for themſelves, as well as they could, what articles of faith appeared in ſcripture neceſſary to ſalvation, excluded, (and how could they admit?) thoſe who refuſed ſubmiſſion to them: but as they acknowledged, after all their care in diſcuſſing, that they might err in their interpretation of ſcripture, it was certainly poſſible that they might ſhut ſome pious and reaſonable Chriſtians out of their ſociety: and this, when it did happen, was a great misfortune, which nothing ſhort of infallibility could prevent; yet *that* they could not hope to find even in the general councils of learned and good men, much leſs in the decrees of popes, or the ſingular opinions of private men. 'In points of faith not neceſſary to ſalvation, 'though confirmed by a probable interpretation

'of

'of ſcripture, difference of opinion, they thought, 'was to be born, with mutual charity.'[t] Points indifferent, reſpecting externals, not ſpecially determined in ſcripture, yet injoined by the governours of the church, were to be complied with, on the authority of the general ſcripture rule, *Let all things be done decently and in order.*

You charge them with *contracting their original plan, in agreement with maxims*, which you ſay they unhappily adopted as *ſelf-evident.*[u] Their original plan, to be judged of from their own declarations, and not from an imaginary and fanciful repreſentation of it, needed no contracting to agree with the maxims to which you object, and which are now to be conſidered; namely:

1. *That there could be no edification in religious ſociety without uniformity of opinion.*[w] They might juſtly believe that no progreſs could be made in any ſcience, where no principles were admitted; and no concluſions enforced, where no premiſſes were agreed in. *Holding* different opinions endangers edification, in ſome degree: *teaching* different opinions, in a greater: yet both may leave room for *ſome*, and even for *much* edification, though not for *ſo much*; provided the opinions be not deſtructive of Chriſtian faith: nor did the firſt reformers think otherwiſe. All who hold the Chriſtian faith, in points eſſential, are ſo far qualified for Chriſtian communion. Individuals muſt judge for themſelves, what they ſhall hold as

[t] Seckend. lib. iii. ſect. 7. §. 20. In fidei articulis capitalibus et neceſſariis nullum eſſe cedendi medium, ſed rigidam veritatem ex ſacris literis eruendam eſſe.... In cæteris omnibus temperamento et conventionibus locum eſſe, immò charitatis lege exigi, ut pacis cauſâ nihil non cedatur, quod, ſalvâ divinâ veritate, cedi poſſit: denique etſi non poſſit conveniri, charitatem tamen meritò colendam eſſe.

[u] Confeſſ. p. 3. [w] Ibid.

as ſuch Chriſtian faith ; and churches muſt judge for themſelves, whom they ſhall conſider as holding it.

2. *That the true ſenſe of ſcripture could be but* ONE.[x] And I cannot but be of the ſame opinion ; otherwiſe you make the oracles of truth as uncertain and fallacious as the oracles of impoſtors ; which were ſo expreſſed as to be capable of different, and even contrary, ſenſes : and if every ſenſe, to which the ſcriptures may be tortured, were equally true and ſafe, *unlearned* and *unſtable* men could not *wreſt them to their own deſtruction.* Indeed the ONE ſenſe of ſcripture may be general, and comprehend under it ſeveral particulars. If all thoſe ſeveral particulars are neceſſary doctrines, *all* muſt be believed, by perſons who are capable of receiving them. If one be an eſſential truth, and the other only uſeful, conſcientious teachers will uſe all neceſſary means to aſcertain that one eſſential truth ; and uſe all prudent means, allowed by ſcripture, to recommend every truth contained in it to their diſciples, with an earneſtneſs proportioned to its importance ; yet ſo as to allow thoſe who hold the neceſſary doctrines, to build them on ſuch texts as they judge moſt pertinent, explaning others in other ſenſes ; and even to diſſent from doctrines in which conſent is not viſibly neceſſary.

3. *The* ONE *ſenſe of ſcripture was determined to be . . . the ſenſe of the orthodox fathers, for a certain number of centuries, From theſe they took their interpretations of ſcripture, and upon theſe they formed their rule of faith and doctrine.*[y] This is a heinous charge againſt thoſe generous aſſertors of Chriſtian liberty, the firſt reformers, and common juſtice requires that it ſhould be proved before it is

 believed.

[x] Ibid. [y] Ibid.

believed. Whatever regard they might have for thoſe venerable writers the ancient fathers, eſpecially when they firſt came out of a church where their authority was exceſſive, yet the reformers knew how to reſtrain this regard for them within proper bounds: for Luther, in his commentaries upon Geneſis, chap. xxi. obſerves, 'that the 'papiſts draw articles of faith from the ſayings of 'the holy fathers, and will not ſuffer them to be 'diſputed. The word of God alone demands aſ-'ſent, not canons or ſayings of the fathers, any 'further than as they agree with ſcripture.'[z] Only ſcripture was the authority on which they reſted: yet if, after proving the ſenſe of a text by the common uſe of the language, and by parallel or ſimilar places, appearances of ambiguity and doubts ſhould remain in the minds of any perſons, the like explications, given by former good and learned men, muſt be of ſome, and may often be juſtly of great, uſe to remove thoſe doubts. And if, after producing good ſcripture evidence for doctrines, objections ſhould be raiſed againſt it from other ſcriptures, or from the difficulty of comprehending the ſubject, it muſt certainly be a great confirmation of our faith in them to find, that the ancient creeds of the church, the deciſions of her general councils, and the writings of her moſt reſpected fathers, agreed in the ſame belief. Therefore the early proteſtants, particularly of our own church, thought it the diſcreteſt way of forming their judgements, and the moſt reputable way of defending them, to make uſe of theſe helps. Still, were it poſſible that a private perſon

[z] Qui (papiſtæ) ex ſingulis dictis et verbis ſanctorum patrum faciunt articulos fidei, quibus non liceat refragari . . . Ideo uni et ſoli verbo Dei credendum eſt, non canonibus, non ſanctorum patrum dictis, niſi quatenus cum verbo conſentiunt.

perſon could have an infallible certainty of the meaning of any text, or of the true ſtate of any doctrine, which all the church had miſtaken, he not only might, but ought to prefer it to all the creeds, councils, and fathers, that could be produced againſt him. But in proportion as he hath any cauſe to be diffident of himſelf and of his own opinion; the concurring perſuaſions of others may reaſonably have authority with him; and it will always be one conſideration preſent to the mind of an humble and prudent Chriſtian, that, ordinarily ſpeaking, it is much more likely that one or a few ſhould err through ignorance or partiality, perhaps unperceived, than greater numbers, at leaſt, equally qualified, (and eſpecially than the body of the Chriſtian church, through ſucceſſive ages,) in points of importance. Regard to antiquity, and univerſality of ſentiments, thus limited, will never lead perſons either into popery, or any other dangerous miſtake.

You complain, that by this means they *reduced their reſpective churches within the bounds of a theological ſyſtem. The conſequence of which was, that every opinion deviating from this ſyſtem, whatever countenance and ſupport it might have from a different ſenſe of ſcripture, became a declared hereſy* [a]. I know of no theological ſyſtem, among the early proteſtants, drawn out from the writings of the fathers. Peter of Lombardy, indeed, compoſed one in the twelfth century; but I hope you do not miſtake him for a proteſtant. The German proteſtants lived under ſeveral princes, who alſo were ſubject to the emperour: articles and confeſſions were therefore drawn up by them, to juſtify themſelves from the charge of hereſy and ſedition, ſtating the points in which they differed

 from

[a] Confeſſ. p. 3.

from the church of Rome in doctrine and ceremonies, and condemning the wild and seditious positions of enthusiasts; throwing their opponents into three classes: such as taught, for articles of faith necessary to salvation, doctrines not grounded in scripture, they called *diabolical*: such they esteemed papists and enthusiasts. Those who differed in their interpretation of scripture, and refused to acknowledge what the universal church had held as necessary doctrines, taught in scripture, by the testimony of her creeds, general councils, and consent of ancient doctors, they judged *heretical*: as such they condemned anabaptists. And those who differed in points of less moment they thought were to be born with[b]. Daillé says, that 'he never heard of any reformer, or ever read in their writings, that they allowed the authority of the fathers was a sufficient ground of faith: but that some of them used their evidence against the papists, to prove that they had introduced novel opinions, and corrupted the faith in later times.'[c] And in their publick confessions we find them 'avouching before God and the whole church, in heaven and in earth, that we do with a true faith embrace all the writings of the prophets and apostles.'[d] —— 'That the apostle Peter hath said, that the holy scriptures are not of any private interpretation; therefore we do not allow all expositions: . . . but we acknowledge that interpretation of scripture for authentical and proper, which being taken from the scriptures themselves . . . accordeth with the rule of faith and charity. . . . Wherefore we do not contemn the

[b] Vide Seckend. lib. iii. sect. 7. §. 20. p. 54.
[c] De usu patrum, cap. vi. p. 309, 310.
[d] Saxon confession.

'the holy treatiſes of the fathers agreeing with 'the ſcriptures; from whom, notwithſtanding, 'we do modeſtly diſſent, . . . as they are ſome-'times found altogether contrary to the ſame. 'Neither do we think that we do them any 'wrong, . . . ſeeing that they will not have their 'writings matched with the canonical ſcriptures, '. . . but bid us take thoſe things that agree, 'and leave thoſe that diſagree: and according to 'this order we account of the decrees or canons 'of councils.'[e] —— Wherefore we do for this 'cauſe alſo allow thoſe three creeds, namely, 'the apoſtles, the Nicene, and Athanaſius's 'creed, becauſe they be agreeable to the written 'word of God.'[f] It could not give juſt offence to any one, if what was hereſy by this rule was declared to be ſo. The reformers were to anſwer to Chriſt, if by any blameable neglect, or turn of mind, they ſo far miſtook as to condemn a needful truth, or any error conſiſtent with the rule of faith, for hereſy. Some of theſe, who were really heretical, or (according to Luther's diſtinction) diabolical, were ſuch as you deſcribe; men *whoſe pride, paſſion, and ſelf-conceit knew no bounds, and whom the moſt reaſonable terms of communion did not reſtrain, under pretence of aſſerting their liberty; and who were ſcandals to all religion, and nuſances to all civil ſociety:* yet probably moſt, if not all, (but certainly many of them) were willing to ſubſcribe to ſcripture, as the word of God, and containing all things neceſſary to ſalvation. Were they not then, according to your way of thinking, fit to be admitted for teachers, without any further declaration? and can that way of thinking be right? You add,

[e] Latter confeſſion of Helvetia.
[f] French confeſſion.

That they were the offspring of the reformation was not to be denied.[g] Rather of abſurd attempts to reform the reformation: not genuine productions of it, but unnatural grafts upon it, which could not thrive in it. Thus Storke and Muncer cenſured Luther for not having done *enough*. They were, in their times, the advocates for *abſolute liberty, equal and impartial liberty*, preaching againſt magiſtrates, that all men ſhould be upon a level, and all their goods common. Doctrines ſure of gaining proſelytes among the licentious rabble, who greedily embraced a re-reformation, which obliged them in conſcience to plunder the rich: for they built all upon the bible, interpreted by their own ſpirit, which they called the ſpirit of Chriſt; for ſo they interpreted, *we muſt be all taught of God*. According to which ſpirit they propheſied to their ſeditious bands ſucceſs in their war with the nobles and magiſtrates, becauſe the ſcriptures had promiſed expreſsly, that *the righteous ſhould waſh their feet in the blood of the ungodly*.[h] And although they were miſerably convinced of the falſeneſs of their interpretations of both thoſe texts, by the execution of Muncer and 300 of his chief aſſociates, and the ſlaughter of above 5000 of his deluded followers in battle, the buſy interpreting ſpirit was not ſubdued. It flamed out again in the taylor of Leyden, John Becold, who went on in the ſame track, preaching up an equality, and no magiſtracy: till having made himſelf maſter of Munſter, he was, as he affirmed, *taught of God*,[i] that the city ſhould be governed by 12 men of his name, and he himſelf ſhould be king of the univerſe. When his majeſty appeared in publick, two young men carried

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[g] Confeſ. p. 4.
[h] Pſ. lviii. 9. [i] John vi. 45.

a bible before him, as his guide: and to ſhew his ſtrict adherence to *ſcripture precedents*, he celebrated the Lord's ſupper with 5000 communicants, with the primitive practice of a love-feaſt, conſiſting of three courſes; in the midſt of which he went out, and himſelf beheaded a priſoner, and returned with thoſe bloody hands, to finiſh the holy ſupper.[k]

Theſe circumſtances laid the proteſtants under a neceſſity of publiſhing to the whole world explicit confeſſions of their faith and doctrine; —— *and by this means they acquitted themſelves, at leaſt among all equitable judges, of the ſcandal of abetting the ſchiſmatical and ſeditious enthuſiaſts, who about that time infeſted different countries, under the pretence of promoting reformation.*[l] Then you allow, explicit confeſſions of faith and doctrine are *ſometimes* neceſſary; and particularly *then* neceſſary when ſchiſmatical and ſeditious enthuſiaſts pretend to promote reformation, under claim of interpreting ſcripture by their private ſpirit. And is not this conceſſion an anſwer to your whole book, and a juſtification of calling for *formal atteſtations, to acquit ourſelves of the ſcandal of abetting ſuch ſchiſmatical and ſeditious doctrines?*

You complain that *theſe confeſſions . . . . very ſoon became of more importance than juſt to ſerve a preſent turn.*[m] The turn that was then preſent is ſtill preſent, and will be ſo, in different degrees, as long as the church ſhall continue militant; and laying them aſide would raiſe a reproach, too probable at firſt, and likely to grow continually juſter, that the good old doctrines were changed, and a wide opening made for ever ſo many bad ones to come in their room.

[k] Sleiden et Hortenſius.
[l] Confeſſ. p. 5. [m] Ibid.

To ſecure the reputation of their uniformity to all ſucceding times, an unfeigned aſſent to the publick confeſſion, confirmed either by ſubſcription, or a ſolemn oath, became, in moſt of the proteſtant churches, an indiſpenſable condition of qualifying their paſtors for the miniſtry.[n] One occaſion of confeſſions in particular churches grew out of the obedience that was due from them to their biſhops and their princes. To juſtify their non-ſubmiſſion to their biſhops, it was neceſſary to point out the particular ſinful doctrines and practices to which they durſt not ſubmit; and at the ſame time to ſhew that they did not forſake the catholick church, but retained all the doctrines eſtabliſhed by it, from ſcripture, in the creeds and general councils: and this they did when they ſeparated from the popiſh biſhops. And as ſome mad enthuſiaſts, under pretence of reformation, had behaved very diſorderly againſt the peace of the ſtate, on miſtaken principles, it became neceſſary to juſtify themſelves to the civil magiſtrates, by publickly diſavowing ſuch miſtaken principles. On the firſt of theſe occaſions moſt of their confeſſions, in the main, agree; and as the papiſts ſtill endeavour to inſtil their errors into our people, it is neceſſary that our teachers ſhould declare againſt them, for a ſecurity that they will not preach ſuch doctrines. On the ſecond, they varied according to the ſeveral opinions of ſeditious enthuſiaſts in their reſpective diſtricts, who had diſturbed the civil peace. Theſe latter not only have varied in ſeveral churches, but alſo may vary in the ſame church, as new enthuſiaſts and diſturbers of the peace ariſe. But it was never the intent of any to give a full detail of all that was to be believed or practiced by true Chriſtians. They are principally meant

[n] Confeſſ. p. 6.

meant as the abjuration of errors; not at all as a perfect delineation of gospel perfection.

But this expedient, intended to prevent division in particular societies, unhappily proved the means of imbroiling different churches one with another.[o] If that happened to be the event, it was the effect of their unreformed passions, not of their reformed principles.[p] In the great dispute betwixt Luther and Zuinglius, about Christ's presence in the Lord's supper, both believed the necessary truth, that he, who partakes of the elements in faith, eats the body of Christ that was given for us, and drinks his blood shed for the remission of sins, and thereby hath communion with the body of Christ and with the blood of Christ: the difference was, whether Christ were there *substantially* coexisting with the elements, or only *effectually*: in short, whether he were there in a *possible* or *impossible* manner. Consubstantiation is not a heresy, but an absurdity; and Luther, in refusing communion with the Zuinglians, departed from his own principle, which was, that difference of interpretation, in points not essential, (as the modus of the presence here, when the presence itself was agreed in) should be born with mutual charity. And in the conference at Marpurgh, where they accorded in every point else, they also concurred in the following conclusion: 'That since they all agreed about the chief 'points of doctrine, they should for the future 'refrain from all contention, and pray to God 'that he would also enlighten them in this con-'troversy, and put them in the way of con-'cord.'[q] To which Luther and Zuinglius, with their

[o] Ibid. [p] See before, p. 16, note [t].

[q] Credimus et profitemur omnes, de cœnâ Domini nostri Jesu Christi, quòd —— quòd item sacramentum altaris sit

their aſſociates, ſigned. And though the firſt of theſe had great fire, and the latter much ruſticity in their natures, they ſhook hands and parted friendly. Their ſubſequent quarrels muſt be imputed to other cauſes than to their common principles; which while they led them to make publick profeſſion of their faith, obliged them to bear their mutual differences with mutual charity.

At length the immortal Chillingworth aroſe, who diſclaimed the defence of the proteſtant religion, as it lay in ſyſtems and confeſſions, and appealed to the bible only.[1] How can you ſuggeſt this? 'We 'have, ſaith he himſelf, *other direction*, the teſti-'mony of the primitive Chriſtians.' He calls the ſcripture, and the conſent of the antient doctors, 'the pillars of faith.'[2] And in his book ſays, 'ſome proteſtants took their direction in 'this work of reformation *only from ſcripture*; 'others from the writings of fathers and the de-'crees of councils of the firſt five ages;' and that 'they did beſt that followed ſcripture, in-'terpreted

ſit ſacramentum veri corporis et ſanguinis Jeſu Chriſti. Et quòd ſpiritualis manducatio carnis et ſanguinis ejuſdem unicuique Chriſtiano imprimis neceſſaria ſit. —— Quanquam autem inter nos hactenus non planè potuit convenire, num verum corpus et verus ſanguis Chriſti pani et vino corporaliter inſit: nihilominus tamen debet utraque pars, altera erga alteram, declarare Chriſtianam charitatem, quatenus id cujuſque conſcientia ferre poteſt. Et utraque pars à Deo Opt. Max. aſſiduis precibus contendere debet, ut is nobis per ſpiritum ſuum verum intellectum conſtabilire dignetur. Subſcripſerunt Lutherus, Jonas, Melanchthon, Oſiander, Agricola, Brentius: Œcolampadius, Zuinglius, Bucerus, Hedio.

Lavater. in hiſtoriâ de origine et progreſſu controverſiæ ſacramentariæ de cœnâ Domini, p. 15, 16.

[1] Confeſſ. p. 7. note.

[2] Preface to an anſwer to N. N. §. 13, 16.

'terpreted by catholick written tradition.'[t] And in his reaſons againſt popery, ſent to Mr. Lewgar, he profeſſes 'the foundation of his faith is '*ſcripture and univerſal tradition.*' Nor has he any objection to their delivering their ſenſe of ſcripture in ſyſtems and confeſſions; for he ſays, 'that the apoſtle's creed (as it is explained in the 'latter creeds of the catholick church) contains 'all thoſe points of belief which were by God's 'command of neceſſity to be preached to all, 'and believed by all.'[u]

In the ſame note you ſay, *M. des Maizeaux (Chillingworth's biographer) thought it neceſſary to exculpate Chillingworth from this popiſh charge of novelty, and, as it ſeems to me, has ſucceded very ill.* Had Chillingworth meant by *the bible only* to have excluded all aſſiſtance from the ancient creeds, general councils, and fathers, for underſtanding their true ſenſe and meaning, we ſee it had not been a *novelty*, from a paſſage above-quoted; in which he witneſſes, that 'ſome pro-'teſtants took their direction in this work of re-'formation *only from ſcripture:*' but this was not his meaning, becauſe, in the ſame paſſage, 'they did beſt, in his opinion, that followed 'ſcripture interpreted by catholick written tra-'dition.' And that this was no *new-opinion* des Maizeaux has ſufficiently ſhewn, from our VIth article and the harmony of confeſſions. And if Chillingworth's method of defending proteſtantiſm had been ſuch an innovation, as you pretend, it would not have had, as it hath, the approbation, in due form, of the vice-chancellor and the two profeſſors of divinity of the univerſity of Oxford, and of archbiſhop Sheldon's chaplain,

[t] Ch. v. §. 82. [u] Ch. iv. §. 1, 23.

lain, Dr. Stradling, at its third impreſſion in 1663.

But the queſtion, you ſay, *was not, what all proteſtants had* declared; *but, whether* any *proteſtant church had* acted *conformably to that declaration, and ventured to defend the proteſtant religion on ſcripture principles, even at the expence (if ſo it ſhould fall out) of its own eſtabliſhed confeſſion?* Yes, ſir, all proteſtant churches, who had *declared*, that ſcripture thus rightly interpreted was the ground of their religion, *acted* conformably to that declaration, when they drew up their confeſſions according to theſe principles. But you require them to *act* in conformity to their *declaration*, by contradicting their confeſſion, which they publickly acknowledge was drawn up agreeably to their declaration. This is a new method of conformity, which I ſuppoſe thoſe gentlemen beſt underſtand, who, having *willingly and ex animo declared* that all and every the articles contained in the confeſſion of their own church are *agreeable* to the word of God, think they *act* moſt in conformity to that declaration by writing againſt thoſe very articles, as *contrary* to the word of God. However, ſir, if you make it a queſtion, whether *any* proteſtant church, having declared the bible only to be its rule of faith, and made a confeſſion of faith, as they imagined, agreeably thereto; yet, afterwards, finding reaſon to doubt whether they had not determined more than the true ſenſe of ſcripture would warrant, ever ventured to defend the proteſtant religion on ſcripture principles, at the expence of its *once* eſtabliſhed confeſſion, by being more reſerved in a ſubſequent confeſſion: you have an inſtance of this courage in the church of England, in leaving K. Edward's IIId. article more general.

The

The moſt conſiderable of the points in diſpute among them [the papiſts] *had never been decided* e cathedrâ, *and ſo were left open to amicable debate, without breach of unity; whereas the doctrines controverted among proteſtants were ſolemnly eſtabliſhed in their ſeveral confeſſions.*[w] — The reaſons of the proteſtant confeſſions have been mentioned before, page 24; and it is ſurpriſing that different churches, reforming in ſeveral parts of Europe at the ſame time, ſhould ſo nearly agree in the points which occaſioned them to ſeparate from Rome: in ſo many particulars was that church corrupted, that different churches might have proteſted for different reaſons, and all ſufficient to juſtify their ſeparation. In their deciſions againſt irregular enthuſiaſts their vindications of themſelves muſt be as various as the ſeditions and falſe doctrines of thoſe enthuſiaſts in the reſpective diſtricts ſhould call for; and the outward plan in worſhip and ceremonies would differ according to their reſpective judgements of expediency, and as the circumſtances of time and place might perſuade. In all theſe points, not affecting fundamentals, they allowed variety with the unity of charity; and if individuals quarrelled, the contention was contrary to proteſtant principles. If ſome, in oppoſing the popiſh doctrine of merit in good works, were carried ſo far as to approach imperceptibly towards fataliſm, others, in urging the neceſſity of perſonal obedience, verged upon Pelagianiſm, ſuch differences, according to their own principles, ſhould have been born with: if they were the occaſion of contention, the complexions of men were principally in fault. The Dominicans and Franciſcans diſputed as much among the papiſts on theſe points; and you yourſelf think *That controverſy muſt have ariſen, though*

[w] Confeſſ. p. 8.

though Chriſtians had been candid, capable, and upright throughout.[x]

But you ſay, *the confeſſions were ratified by oaths, ſubſcriptions, &c. and the belief of them thereby made an indiſpenſable condition of communion.*[y] How neceſſary ſoever it might be thought at firſt, when almoſt every ſtate was divided, and the members of it contending with one another, to throw papiſts, proteſtants, and irregulars into claſſes, by ſubſcribing confeſſions of their faith, as the two former did, (and the latter were known by having none to ſubſcribe,) yet neither the neceſſity nor the practice continued long. When the religion of any proteſtant church was eſtabliſhed in a ſtate, and the governours were at leiſure to attend the inſtruction of the people, they thought it ſufficient to oblige the clergy only, who were ſupported by the ſtate, to ſubſcribe their confeſſion; as a guide to them in grounding the people committed to their care in the neceſſary doctrines of faith, guarding them againſt the errors of popery and enthuſiaſm, and teaching them whatever truths of piety and morals publick or private utility required: and, in grateful return to the magiſtrate for their appointments from the publick, to caution the people from encouraging the uſurpations of Rome and the ſeditions of fanaticks: ſo that much more may be required, both juſtly and wiſely, of miniſters, than of mere communicants. A doctrine may be conſiſtent with ſalvation; and yet extremely improper to be taught. An Antinomian, or an aſſerter of community of poſſeſſions, or a denier of the lawfulneſs of oaths, or of defenſive war, may be a good man, but he muſt be a dangerous preacher: and other like inſtances might be given.

The

[x] Confeſſ. p. 254, note.

[y] Confeſſ. p. 8.

The harmony of confeſſions publiſhed by the Belgic and Gallican churches in 1581, *as an ample teſtimony of the unanimity of proteſtants in their principal doctrines, . . . was even affronted by the church of England; for being tranſlated into Engliſh in* 1586, *archbiſhop Whitgift . . . would not allow it to be printed in London, and employed his authority to have it ſuppreſſed in other places. . . . It was, however, printed at Cambridge that year. . . . The Belgic and Gallican churches having expreſſed notions of church-government, ceremonies,* &c. *in ſome ſhort obſervations at the end of the book, not very favorable to Whitgift's principles, his Grace's diſtaſte for the work is not wholly unaccountable.*[z] The Harmony was publiſhed in 1581; the Engliſh confeſſion had been publiſhed by authority in Latin ever ſince the year 1563: yet, as you acknowledge, in the Harmony her confeſſion conſiſts of extracts from biſhop Jewel's Apology, and is not taken from her publick and authentick records. Of whatever authority that Apology might be, in giving a view of the publick confeſſions of ſeveral churches, it was not equal dealing to give the Engliſh from the works of a ſingle doctor, and all the reſt in the words of their publick records. This might be a reaſon why the archbiſhop endeavoured to ſuppreſs the work. Your reaſon ſuggeſted, *viz.* that it was, becauſe they had expreſſed notions of church government, ceremonies, &c. in ſome ſhort obſervations at the end of the book, unfavorable to Whitgift's principles, appears to be groundleſs; for as to the authority of the church to interpret ſcripture, they plainly allow that, 'in the judging of controverſies, not 'any *judges whatſoever* do take unto themſelves 'the name of the church; . . . but *judges law-*

'*fully*

[z] Confeſſ. p. 9. and note.

'*fully choſen*:' and with reſpect of decreeing ceremonies, they allow of 'ſuch laws as pertain to 'order and decency, . . . by the judgement of '*a lawful aſſembly*.'[a]

This Harmony was *intended as a full and ſatisfactory confutation of the popiſh calumnies on this head*,[b] [of unanimity.] If the Harmony was not a *full* confutation of the popiſh calumnies, it was one to *a very great degree*. And was it not in all reſpects right to vindicate themſelves as far as they could?

You think the manner in which this work was executed would obſtruct the good effects expected from it, becauſe, 1. *It made no mention of thoſe whoſe confeſſions diſſented*.[c] If you mean the confeſſions of particular men, that was out of the ſcope of the book, which profeſſes to be *an Harmony of the confeſſions of the faith of the Chriſtian and reformed* CHURCHES, *which purely profeſs the holy doctrine of the goſpel, in all the chief kingdoms, nations, and provinces of Europe*. And with reſpect to churches, what need was there, in a work deſigned to ſhew how far the principal proteſtant churches agreed, to mention thoſe who differed from them? The editors were not diſpoſed, whatever you may be, ſir, to do the work of the papiſts for them.

2. *All the world knew very well that not one of theſe eleven churches would allow any man to miniſter in it, and hardly, perhaps, to communicate with it, who ſhould refuſe to ſubſcribe the confeſſion of that church, even though he ſhould offer to ſubſcribe or ſwear to every other ſyſtem in the collection*.[d] You give no proof that this caſe ever happened: and I doubt whether ſubſcribing was ever made a condition

[a] Obſerv. on ſect. 10. and ſect. 17.
[b] Confeſſ. p. 9. [c] Confeſſ. p. 10. [d] Confeſſ. p. 11.

dition of communicating: certainly not with us.

3. *The ſhort obſervations at the end of the Harmony . . . plainly ſhew, that ſome of theſe churches were at too great a diſtance from each other, to be reconciled by any ſuch equivocal expedients.*[e] Thoſe at greateſt diſtance were the Lutherans and Calviniſts: 'but they,' ſays the editor in his preface, 'if ſo be that men keep within the bounds of their 'confeſſions, and all cavilling and ſophiſtry be 'laid aſide, and as well faithful as favorable ex-'poſition be admitted, ſhall be thought very 'nearly to agree in all things. . . . Of the thing 'itſelf there is no ſtrife; we differ in certain ad-'juncts and circumſtances of the thing.' Which certainly may be done conſiſtently with Chriſtian unity.

The Corpus Confeſſionum was *printed at Geneva*, 1612; . . . in which were *exhibited the confeſſions of ſixteen different churches whole and entire, as they were publiſhed and acknowledged by the churches to which they reſpectively belonged. . . This* Heylin *denied to be true; alledging, on the part of the church of England, that the firſt clauſe of her 20th article, concerning church authority, was in this collection feloniouſly ſecreted.* You refer us to *An Hiſtorical and Critical Eſſay on the 39 Articles*, to ſee the editors of the *Corpus Confeſſionum* well vindicated.[f] The author of this eſſay is ſaid to be Anthony Collins, who juſtifies the editors of the *Corpus Confeſſionum* in this manner: 'Let the apologiſts for 'the authority of the clauſe produce, if they 'can, a Latin printed copy of the articles, with 'the clauſe in them, printed before 1612. If 'that cannot be done, how is the editor of the 'Harmony to be upbraided, who printed the

 'Latin

[e] Confeſſ. p. 12.

[f] Confeſſ. p. 12. and note.

'Latin articles, according to *all* copies of them, 'and, if he had printed them otherwiſe, had had 'no copy to juſtify him?'[g] My inconſiderable ſtudy can produce ſuch a Latin printed copy of the articles, printed before 1612, Wolf's edition of 1563. Collins ſays, 'the editor publiſhed, *as* '*he ought*, the articles of 1571.' — That is another point, which I ſhall not ſtay now to examine; but it is certain the editor might have had another copy, with the clauſe, though perhaps he did not know it.

On the article of juſtification and faith *the editors obſerve, that all the confeſſions of the* [*proteſtant*] *churches teach this primary article. . . . with a moſt holy conſent. Does not this note, with which this article alone is honored, ſeem to imply a conſciouſneſs in the editors, that this was the ſingle article in which all theſe confeſſions did agree?*[h] How can you aſk this queſtion, when you know, as every one, who hath read the book, muſt, that it implies a groſs falſehood? Agreement of all in one primary article might well be remarked, as in it they all diſagreed with the church of Rome: and yet they might all agree in many others, which they held in common with the church of Rome, or which were not of equal moment. Their agreement concerning *juſtification and faith* might be as far as their confeſſions reached, and yet differ concerning many points to which their confeſſions did not reach, though ſome warm divines might imagine they did. You are yourſelf pleaſed to make allowances for this, (at page 8.) in favor of the church of Rome: why may not equal allowance be made in the caſe of proteſtant churches?

There

[g] Introd. to the Eſſay, p. 23. [h] Confeſſ. p. 14.

There is a dead ſilence in many (ſometimes in the majority) of theſe confeſſions, concerning ſome of the fundamental articles of the Chriſtian religion. Thus only ſix of them are referred to as ſpeaking of the providence of God, *in which number (I am loath to obſerve it) the Engliſh confeſſion is not reckoned for one; though both Jewel's apology and the* 39 *articles are inſerted in this collection,*[i] [the *Corpus Confeſſionum.*]

Theſe confeſſions, as has been already obſerved, were not intended as ſummaries of all religious truths, but rather of ſuch as had been ſuppreſſed or corrupted by the papiſts or enthuſiaſts, or were oppoſite to errors falſely imputed to the proteſtants. For other points they refer us to the three creeds, whoſe articles of faith, though they repete them not, they eſtabliſh in that reference. They likewiſe refer to the ſcriptures of both Teſtaments, as containing all things neceſſary to ſalvation; in which ſcriptures, I preſume, you will not ſay, that there is a dead ſilence with reſpect to the providence of God. But as you expreſs an unwillingneſs to obſerve this omiſſion in our articles, (whether this be true or falſe, God and your own heart beſt know) I will be kind enough to adminiſter ſome relief; for though not largely dilated upon, neither is it wholly paſſed over in a dead ſilence: *Deus Creator et* CONSERVATOR *omnium, tum viſibilium tum inviſibilium,* is mentioned in the firſt article.

Again, eleven of theſe ſixteen confeſſions take no notice of the reſurrection of the dead.[k] The ſcriptures and the three creeds, as a ſummary of faith drawn from thoſe ſcriptures, being received as the rule of faith in all proteſtant churches, explicit ſubſcriptions, as ſymbols of particular

 churches,

[i] Ibid. [k] Confeſſ. p. 15.

churches, were not neceſſary, to points in which no varieties of opinion had been. A particular ſubſcribing to the belief of a reſurrection would not have been neceſſary, if all Chriſtians were known to believe it: thus, this very article was explicitly delivered in K. Edward VI.'s book, but left out in that of Elizabeth as unneceſſary. But if any perſons were known to doubt it, or diſbelieve it, a neceſſity aroſe of inquiring whether a candidate for the office of a Chriſtian teacher believed it or not. If St. Paul had heard cauſe to doubt whether Hymeneus and Philetus believed it, would he have ordained them on a general declaration that *they received the ſcripture as the word of God, and would inſtruct the people out of that only*;[l] and ſo have ſuffered *their word to eat as doth a canker, and overthrow the faith of ſome?*[m]

In ſome of theſe churches the inconveniences of inſiſting on theſe teſts of orthodoxy have been ſo great, that they have found it the wiſeſt way either intirely to drop them, or to content themſelves with ſome general declaration or promiſe from the miniſter, that he will not openly oppoſe them.[n] If you mean that ſome proteſtant churches have dropped *ſubſcriptions* intirely, and content themſelves with a general *promiſe* from the miniſter, that he will not openly oppoſe their eſtabliſhed explanatory articles of faith; then ſuch proteſtant churches continue evidences that they think explanatory articles of faith may be eſtabliſhed; and that it is lawful and uſeful to prohibit any miniſter in that church to contradict them: which is abſolutely contrary to your ſyſtem. If you mean, as you ſeem to wiſh the reader would underſtand you, that ſome proteſtant churches having experienced the inconveniences

[l] Confeſſ. p. 17.
[n] Confeſſ. p. 15.
[m] 2 Tim. xi. 17, 18.

ences of inſiſting on ſubſcriptions, have entirely dropped them, without any equivalent, or nearly equivalent promiſe; it would be but fair to mention thoſe churches, that we might examine what kind of ſecurity the miniſters in thoſe churches and ſtates give to their governours, of their faith and peaceable behaviour: and what have been, and appear likely to be, the conſequences of ſuch relaxation. Till then, this muſt be placed among the heap of affirmations or inſinuations without proof. Our diſſenters here, I ſuppoſe, univerſally require confeſſions of faith at ordinations; and, I preſume, would refuſe to ordain a man, whoſe confeſſion they thought erroneous or defective in any thing material. And being drawn up each by himſelf, I do not apprehend they are all expreſſed in ſcripture words only; nay, am aſſured that none of them are: which is an argument that ſuch confeſſions would not be ſatisfactory. Amongſt the very Quakers it is a rule, that 'thoſe who appear in a publick cha-'racter to exhort and adviſe others, ſhould give 'ſatisfaction to the members of the ſame com-'munity of the propriety of their miſſion.'[o] And although they do not require them to ſubſcribe a declaration againſt water-baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper, yet undoubtedly they take care to know their minds about theſe and other points alſo; which amounts, in effect, to the ſame thing.

If they (the preſent governours of the church of England) had had the original work of reformation in their hands, together with the light and experience which the preſent and paſt ages have afforded, they would, it may be preſumed, not have impoſed a formal ſubſcription.[p] A note at bottom informs us,

[o] Liſter to Dr. Formey, Lond. 1766, p. 44.
[p] Confeſſ. p. 16.

this was written in the year 1755. Some ſuch like words were written by Dr. Chandler ſeven years before, from a ſpeech of John Alphonſo Turretine, ſpoken above forty years before that, to induce the then governours in the church of Geneva to drop ſubſcriptions.[a] You apply to the preſent governours of our church the perſuaſion that Turretine had of the firſt impoſers of ſubſcription to their *Conſenſus* at Geneva: But your views are very different, though your words are ſo nearly alike. Yours is to aboliſh all ſubſcription or equivalent promiſe to teach according to explanatory articles of faith: Turretine was only againſt eſtabliſhing a *new* ſubſcription, though he thinks all kinds of ſubſcriptions whatſoever are great inconveniences in ſuch matters as were then before them, ſuch as *perſons of all ſides avow to be indifferent, and no ways eſſential to ſalvation:* yet 'for the ſake of peace, and out of reſpect to 'thoſe very regulations, he was willing that this 'doctrine ſhould be the only one that is taught; 'and that they who are of contrary ſentiments 'ſhall not be allowed to teach them.'[b] All that was deſired was to change *ſubſcription* to ſuch *unimportant* points into a *promiſe* not to preach contrary to them, 'in order to the preſervation of 'peace and union amongſt themſelves, and to 'preſerve an uniformity in the manner of their 'teaching.'[c] Now if our governours knew by what better means to preſerve this peace and uniformity in points *important* and *neceſſary to ſalvation*, as well as in others neceſſary for the better inſtruction of the people, I preſume you do them no injury to ſuppoſe, that had they had the original work of reformation in their hands, they would

[a] Chandler's Caſe of Subſcription, p. 173.
[b] Caſe of Subſcription, p. 160. [c] Ibid. p. 157.

would not have impoſed ſubſcription, but adopted this more effectual method of procuring the ends intended. But this had been quite contrary to your deſign in dropping ſubſcriptions, which evidently is, that ſome of the now eſtabliſhed doctrines of our church may be contradicted in the pulpit and overturned. Whether you would not think, when this was done, the oppoſite doctrines ought to be ſubſcribed, or at leaſt a promiſe made of ſaying nothing againſt them, is a queſtion which I will not anſwer, but leave others to conſider: and it well deſerves their beſt conſideration.

To ſhew the ill effects of eſtabliſhed confeſſions in proteſtant churches, you complain, 1. That *the explications of ſo many minute points of ſcholaſtic theology . . . rendered their breaches among themſelves, occaſioned by theſe explications, utterly irreconcileable.*[t] So far as theſe explications had this effect, of rendering proteſtant churches irreconcileable with each other, in neceſſary points, they were to blame. One (if they underſtood one another in contrary ſenſes) muſt be wrong; and by amicable conference they ſhould endeavour to diſcover what was miſtaken. In points of indifference, and the outward ordering of the church, each hath an equal right to eſtabliſh what ſhe thinks expedient, in her circumſtances, for order, decency, and edification. Here each would charitably ſuffer others to abound in their own ſenſe: but in neceſſary points, in which all the proteſtant churches are agreed, to permit individuals to preach what doctrines they pleaſe, will be no means to *ſtop one popiſh mouth*, or leſſen *the breaches amongſt themſelves.*

[t] Confeſſ. p. 16.

Had they been contented with a ſolemn declaration on the part of teachers and paſtors, that they received the ſcriptures as the word of God, and would inſtruct the people out of them only, leaving them at liberty to diſown whatever, after proper examination, they judged inconſiſtent with theſe, in all human probability the inſtruments of popery would have declined more viſibly, and the true ends of reformation have been more ſpeedily, as well as more effectually, promoted.[a]

Popiſh teachers had erected their miſchievous ſyſtem partly on miſinterpretations of ſcripture: Was employing them, promiſcuouſly with others, to interpret ſcripture according to their own prejudices, a probable method of calling off the people from popiſh errors? Fanaticks were every day venting wild notions, which they imagined, or pretended, they ſaw in ſcripture: would licenſing them too to preach them in all our churches have promoted the true ends of reformation more ſpeedily? Some evils have doubtleſs followed from confeſſions and ſubſcriptions: they may take in too many articles, and be too minute. When there is opportunity this fault ſhould be corrected: But there may be an extreme alſo on the other ſide. Would there have been leſs controverſy, and more edification? Would there not have been vaſtly more confuſion amongſt the people, if every man of every opinion had been let into orders, as a parochial guide, to teach his opinions freely? You indeed ſay, *in all human probability* this would have more viſibly ſunk the intereſts of popery, and more effectually promoted the true ends of the reformation: but how does this probability appear otherwiſe than by giving your word for what you cannot know?

Wiſe

[a] Conſeſſ. p. 17, 18, 19.

Wiſe and good men have always thought the contrary in all proteſtant churches. If your method has been followed in any church, I preſume you have not heard of any great good from it; elſe you would have told us. Indeed you do not ſeem quite clear whether controverſies are good or bad things. Here and at page 6, you admit them to be bad, and argue from that principle: but at page lxxiii. of your preface you ſeem to think the contrary. As to the people being left at liberty to diſown whatever, after proper examination, they judge inconſiſtent with the ſcriptures, ſubſcription by the teachers makes no alteration in the caſe. Men who have ſubſcribed articles may leave their hearers at liberty, as well as men who have not.

But you are diſpoſed, after all, in your next paragraph, to apologize for the firſt reformers. Sir, I ſhould have congratulated you heartily on finding in your book one ſingle inſtance of goodnature, if it had not appeared to be a mere contrivance, to bring a heavier charge againſt the preſent rulers of the church of England. But may there not be ſome apology for them alſo? They have, as well as their predeceſſors had, the early practice of the Chriſtian church to appeal to, *long before the tyrannical ſpirit of Rome prevailed:* * They have ſeen all the great and excellent men in all proteſtant churches, for two centuries, take the ſame method of confeſſions; and they have ſeen, in this age, ſome few religious men indeed, but all irreligious men in general, vehement enemies to them: they have ſeemed to ſee the abſolute neceſſity of them in general, to prevent univerſal diſorder; though carrying matters too far hath produced particular inconveniences.

* Confeſſ, p. 25.

inconveniences. They dread to run from one extreme to another: they dread the licentious turn of the preſent age, and the bitter ſpirit of many writers too much akin to yourſelf. They ſincerely apprehend, after careful conſideration, that popery would gain infinite advantage by throwing down all our fences: that papiſts, who even now give you ſuch alarm, would become pariſh prieſts, and preach plenty of popery, pretending to preach it out of ſcripture only. They conceive alſo that Chriſtian doctrine doth not conſiſt ſolely in oppoſition to popery, but hath its fundamental articles, which every miniſter ought not only to avoid contradicting, but to inculcate; and which ſome may be wrong-headed enough not to ſee in the ſcriptures, or to imagine they ſee the contrary of them there: and theſe are ſurely not fit to edify ſuch as are grounded in a quite different perſuaſion. Is it not poſſible that ſome, *who are capable and willing to examine the ſubject, without partiality and without hypocriſy*,[x] may think thus, though you have not charity enough to believe it?

In thoſe days nothing was thought to be ſufficiently confirmed by ſcripture teſtimonies, without additional vouchers from the ancient worthies of the church: and accordingly, Tertullian, Chryſoſtom, Auſtin, and Jerome, regularly took their places on the ſame bench of judgement with Paul, Peter, James, and John.[y]

Here you charge the reformers with putting the fathers on a level with the apoſtles and evangeliſts, and giving them equal authority. This, ſir, is an accuſation againſt thoſe venerable men, that happens to want the circumſtance of truth: a piece of ingratitude towards thoſe noble aſſerters and

[x] Confeſſ. p. 25. [y] Confeſſ. p. 20.

and recoverers of Chriſtian liberty that you ought to be aſhamed of. Hear Luther in the beginning of his reformation, ſo early as the year 1520; what was his opinion on this point at that time? In his defence of the articles condemned by the bull of Leo X. he ſays, 'Let them be eſteemed 'holy men, and fathers of the churches, yet are 'they mere men, not to be compared with the 'apoſtles and prophets, not ſuperior or equal in 'authority with them, but ſubject to it.'[z] In this opinion he continued to his death; for in the laſt year of his life he writes, as before mentioned, 'We muſt ground our faith on nothing but the 'word of God alone: not on canons, or the 'ſayings of the fathers, further than as they agree 'with ſcripture.'[z] Our own articles make *ſcripture only* their rule of faith. This was their foundation: but the Romaniſts inſiſted that the reformers did not underſtand the ſcriptures otherwiſe than by their private interpretation, contrary to the ſenſe of the univerſal church. This led the reformers, in their diſputations, to juſtify their interpretation by the judgement of the eccleſiaſtical writers and councils of the primitive church; in which alſo they had ſo much the advantage, that biſhop Jewel challenged them to produce one catholick doctor, father, or general council, for the firſt 600 years, in ſupport of any of the 27 points then in queſtion between them. This was not their original plan; for Cranmer's challenge was, to prove againſt any, that the doctrine and religion

[z] Sint ſancti viri et eccleſiarum patres, ſed homines, et apoſtolis atque prophetis impares, et horum authoritati non prælati, nec æquati, ſed ſubjecti. Vide Seckend. lib. I. ſect. 31, §. LXXVII. p. 119. —— Ideo uni et ſoli verbo Dei credendum eſt: non canonibus, non ſanctorum patrum dictis, niſi quatenus cum verbo conſentiunt. Seckend. lib. III. ſect. 37. §. CXXXIX. p. 677.

religion of the church of England was more pure than had been held in England theſe thouſand years, ſo *that God's word may be the judge.* When they carried God's word to be aſcertained by the primitive church, the fathers and general councils, Jewel joined iſſue, and beat them on their own appeal.

In proceſs of time ſome particular perſons began to ſee into this miſtake. In our own country the learned Cartwright, in his diſpute with archbiſhop Whitgift, about the year 1573, *took the courage to appeal from the authority of the fathers, and to preſcribe them narrower limits in the province of determining religious controverſies.*[a] The firſt reformers and eſtabliſhers of the church of England had before limited the authority of the fathers in religious controverſies, by declaring in her VIth article, that *whatſoever is not read* in the holy ſcriptures, *nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it ſhould be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requiſite or neceſſary to ſalvation.* But the puritans, by their foreman, the learned Cartwright, muſt have the honor of firſt diſcovering the miſtake of making the fathers equal with the apoſtles. And is this true, ſir? Did not our biſhop Jewel diſcover as much before? Speaking of the fathers, he ſaith, 'We read their works; we reverence them; we 'give God thanks for them; we call them the 'pillars, the lights, the fathers of God's church: 'we deſpiſe them not. This thing only we ſay, 'Were their learning and holineſs ever ſo great, 'yet be they not equal in credit with the ſcrip-'tures of God.'[b] They indeed often appealed to the fathers to ſtrengthen their own interpretation

[a] Confeſſ. p. 20, 21.
[b] Defence of the Apology, p. 71.

tation of ſcripture: but that may be done without equalling them with the apoſtles, I preſume; for the aforeſaid learned Cartwright is perpetually endeavouring to preſs them into his ſervice, whenever he thinks he can catch them, and would defend the points in diſpute betwixt the church and him by their authority. None are againſt the fathers, but when the fathers are againſt them.

Some few years after this, Eraſmus Johannes, a ſchoolmaſter at Antwerp, took ſtill greater liberties with antiquity. . . . He propoſed that all religious propoſitions ſhould be expreſſed according to the ſimplicity of Chriſt and his apoſtles. . . . But the times were not yet ripe for the toleration of theſe ſentiments; and the poor man who was hardy enough to venture them with the publick, was obliged to fly his country.[c] This hardy ſchoolmaſter was obliged to fly his country for holding with the Arians, that Chriſt was created by the Father before all worlds; which doctrine he believed to be according to the ſimplicity of Chriſt and the apoſtles: but being driven from Antwerp for this opinion, he fled to Poland, where he took ſhelter in the tents of Socinus, by whoſe inſtructions, and the offer of a pariſh on that condition, he changed his opinion, and believed Chriſt to be a a mere man.[d] If his firſt opinion was (as he pretended) according to the ſimplicity of Chriſt and his apoſtles, his ſecond, which contradicted it upon the authority of his Cracovian maſter, was not ſo: unleſs the ſcriptures teach contradictions. He did not, indeed, ſet the fathers *on the ſame bench of judgement with Paul, Peter, James, and John*, but he exalted the authority of Socinus above that of the apoſtles, and even of Chriſt himſelf.

[c] Confeſſ. p. 21, 22.
[d] Sandii Bibliotheca Antitrinitariorum, p. 87.

ſelf. How far thoſe who honor the memory of *an eminent prelate of our own church*, who died in 1761, will thank you for ſhewing how nearly alike he and the ſchoolmaſter of Antwerp thought, I cannot ſay.

When it was ſeen that his lordſhip had reduced his antagoniſts to the diſagreeable neceſſity of holding, that new *and* unſcriptural *words would better fix the ſenſe of ſcripture doctrine, than the words of Chriſt and his apoſtles, the clamor ſubſided.*[a] His lordſhip's collegue, Eraſmus Johannes, could not be admitted to the office of inſtructing a pariſh by Socinus, though they both agreed in acknowledging the ſame words of ſcripture, for inſtance, that *he* (Chriſt) *was before all things*; unleſs he would fix his ſenſe of the doctrine contained in that ſcripture, and that too in Socinus's manner of interpretation. Eraſmus Johannes underſtood the words as aſſerting that Chriſt was, in time, before every other creature: Socinus denied the words to be true in that ſenſe; and that he was only in worth and excellence, as well as in dignity and power, before all other perſons and things. Thus we ſee the firſt broacher of this opinion thought that other, that is, *new* and *unſcriptural* words would better fix the ſenſe of ſcripture-doctrine than the words of an apoſtle. And his lordſhip himſelf obſerves, that, with reſpect to Chriſt's own words, 'the apoſtles and evangeliſts 'were not ſuperſtitiouſly ſcrupulous in number-'ing his words; nay, nor ſo ſollicitous to relate 'the *very words*, and *thoſe only*, which he made 'uſe of,' . . . but thought it 'ſufficient to re-'preſent exactly *the intent* of the whole.' Accordingly his lordſhip takes the liberty of explaning the inſtitution of the Lord's ſupper in other

[a] Confeſſ. p. 22.

other words than thoſe of the evangeliſts: 'The 'whole tenor and form of this inſtitution,' ſaith he, 'is in the figurative way of ſpeaking; and 'all expreſſions in it of the ſame ſort ought to be 'underſtood in the ſame manner: for inſtance, 'the *cup*, in the words recorded by St. Luke and 'St. Paul, is allowed *not* to ſignify the *cup*, but 'the *wine* in the cup. This wine is allowed by 'all not to be itſelf the *new covenant*, nor to be 'changed (or tranſubſtantiated) into the *new* 'covenant; but only to be the *memorial* of the 'new covenant: . . . it follows, by all the 'rules of interpretation, agreeably to the way of 'ſpeaking throughout the whole, that the *bread* 'and *wine* are NOT the natural *body and blood* of 'Chriſt, but the *memorials* of his *body and blood*' [f]. Thus we ſee that *Eraſmus Johannes* and the *eminent prelate that died in* 1761 were both driven to the neceſſity of uſing *new and unſcriptural* words, ſuppoſing that they could thereby *better diſcover to others their ſenſe of ſcripture doctrine, than by the words of Chriſt and his apoſtles.* The words of the prophets and apoſtles are ſufficient for a man to expreſs his own faith; for he knows the ſenſe in which he uſes them: but when different ſenſes have been faſtened on them by different perſons, he may not know whether another perſon, who uſes the ſame words, holds the ſame faith; and therefore, if he is concerned to know the truth of that matter, muſt try it by uſing other words. Which words do not better fix the ſenſe of the ſcripture doctrine, but only diſcover whether he, to whom they are propoſed, intends to expreſs what, in the examiner's judgement, is the true ſcripture doctrine by the ſcripture words.

We

[f] Plain Account, p. 14, 15, 17.

We have reaſon to hope, that our ſuperiors will no longer bind either themſelves or us to an implicit acquieſcence in an authority which may occaſionally be extremely inconſiſtent with our original obligations as Chriſtians, as well as with the diſtinguiſhing principles of our profeſſion as proteſtants.[g] They do not, and our proteſtant ſuperiors never did, require implicit acquieſcence in the authority of the fathers, either of the primitive church, or of the reformation.

Theſe venerable fathers (the latter) *had certainly no right to preſcribe articles of faith to us.*[h] But they certainly had a right to declare their own. The Chriſtian civil ſtate had certainly a right to approve it, if they judged it better fixed on the foundation of ſcripture than theirs was that oppoſed it; and therefore had a right to give it countenance and encouragement: and if its oppoſers held opinions detrimental to the ſtate, they certainly had a right to require of their ſubjects a renunciation of ſuch opinions before they could be intitled to their favors; life, liberty, and property being preſerved to them.

For a compendious view of the teſtimony of the fathers to the ſufficiency of the holy ſcriptures as a rule of religion, the reader may conſult a book intitled, The Divine Oracles, *written by the learned and candid Mr. John Brekel,* 1749.[i] This book I have not ſeen, nor do I apprehend I have any want of it, as I have by me Cranmer's *Confutation of unwritten Verities,* whoſe ſecond chapter is to prove, by the teſtimony of the fathers, *that the writings of the old fathers, without the written word of God, are not able to prove any doctrine in religion.* This is a further confirmation of your having miſrepreſented

[g] Confeſſ. p. 26.
[h] Ibid.
[i] Confeſſ. ibid. note.

misrepresented the first reformers of the church of England, by saying that they equalled the authority of the fathers to that of the scriptures themselves.

All imposed subscriptions to articles of faith and religious doctrines, conceived in unscriptural terms, and inforced by human authority, are utterly unwarrantable, and not to be defended but by arguments and pretences highly dishonorable to the sacred writings, and in many cases contradictory to the express contents of them.[k] In your preface you went no further than *impositions not warranted by scripture*[l]; now you proscribe all *religious doctrines conceived in unscriptural terms*; as if all religious doctrines, conceived in unscriptural terms, were doctrines not warranted by scripture. Yet you blame the church of England for omitting to teach a fundamental article of the Christian religion in her book of articles, and prove it by this argument, because she does not speak of the *providence of God*. Where, sir, in your whole Bible will you find *these words?* But the doctrine you suppose, as well as I, is warranted by scripture; and venture to express it in *unscriptural terms*; nay, censure our articles for not using the same unscriptural terms, though she has expressed the doctrine itself in equivalent terms. And in your note at pages 23, 24, you seem to allow preachers may endeavour to make the sense of scripture more *plain* or more *precise*, by using unscriptural terms. If religion be necessary to a state, human authority is warranted to establish that which they think the true one, and to explane it in as *precise* terms as they can. They do not *fix* the doctrines in order to impose them on any; but only *fix* the doctrines which they, by the aid of the

[k] Ibid. [l] Pref. xci.

ableſt interpreters, believe to be true, and will *encourage* to be taught, and to which, for the ſake of peace, they will not bear any publick and ſeditious contradiction. And ſo far go all the *unſubſcribing* proteſtant churches, whoſe practice you recommend to us; for the manner of taking the ſecurity of their teachers, whether by ſubſcription, promiſe, declaration, or exhortation, matters not. And how the articles of faith in the church of England can be juſtly charged as diſhonorable to the ſacred writings, which are profeſſedly built on their authority, I leave you to make out; and in the mean time to conſider, whether ſuch an open and rude attack upon the eſtabliſhed doctrines of your own church, would have been ſuffered in any other proteſtant church in Europe, except that of whoſe tyrannical and cruel treatment you ſo tragically complain.

CHAP. II. You begin your ſecond chapter with conſidering *the claim of a right to eſtabliſh confeſſions as teſts of orthodoxy in proteſtant churches.* You do not tell us what you mean by theſe confeſſions eſtabliſhed as teſts of orthodoxy; whether the terms of admiſſion to communion with the church, or the terms of being admitted to officiate as miniſters in it: and you wander from one to the other in great confuſion, by ſtudiouſly avoiding to diſtinguiſh the ſeveral relations in which every Chriſtian ſtands. With regard to that primary one which is betwixt Chriſt and a man's own conſcience, no power on earth hath naturally any thing to do. The intercourſe is purely ſpiritual: the grace of God cannot be commanded by man, it is God's mere gift: the returns of man are of the ſame kind, *in ſpirit and in truth*: he cannot believe to ſalvation

ſalvation by proxy, nor can another's good works be made over to him. But then, man's ſalvation being the purchaſe of Chriſt, who hath commanded, as the ordinary means to be intitled to this ſalvation, that a man *believe and be baptized*, a ſecond relation riſes to every Chriſtian, betwixt himſelf and the church, by whoſe miniſtry he is to be taught the faith, and admitted to the privileges which Chriſt hath purchaſed, and united to the fellow-members of that body, of which Chriſt is the Head. And as this Chriſtian ſociety muſt exiſt within the limits of ſome one or more ſtates, whether it be encouraged by them, or diſcouraged, every Chriſtian hath duties incumbent upon him with relation to that particular ſtate in which he lives: if perſecuted, he is commanded by the apoſtles, who were under thoſe circumſtances, *to be ſubject to principalities and powers, to obey magiſtrates, with patience ſuffering wrongfully for conſcience towards God*; *to pray* for them; and to aſſiſt them by *paying tribute and cuſtom*: If protected and encouraged by them in the profeſſion of the ſame faith, religion alters not civil relations; the ſame duties are required, nay, with a ſtronger obligation, *rather doing them ſervice, becauſe they are faithful.*

So that although a man muſt anſwer to God for his own faith, yet he muſt be ſubject to the judgement of the church, whether his faith is ſuch as will qualify him for admiſſion into it. And to infer that upon proteſtant principles *every man is a* CHURCH *to himſelf*, is abſurd; unleſs he is ſelf-ſufficient to teach himſelf, to baptize himſelf, to hold communion with himſelf, to excommunicate himſelf from himſelf, where he condemns himſelf, yet cannot bring himſelf to repentance, and to admit himſelf to himſelf again upon

repentance. Every church, or number of perſons aſſembling for Chriſtian worſhip and diſcipline, hath a right to judge for itſelf, who are intitled, according to the rules of the goſpel, to communicate with it, and who not. It may judge wrong; but it hath a right to judge as well as it can: elſe heathens and Mahometans muſt be admitted, if they deſire it. This community, or they who are appointed to act in its name, may alſo lay down further rules, which expediency ſeems to require, and all her members think lawful. You think [m] that their *previous conſent ſhould be had.* But as human nature is ſuch, that it will often be denied for ſlight reaſons, why may not their ſubſequent compliance be ſufficient? and why ſhould they deny it in ſuch a caſe? Cannot the time, the place, the office of worſhip, indifferent modes, rules of diſcipline for ſuſpenſion, excommunication, receiving penitents, be otherwiſe eſtabliſhed? How then will any of them ever be eſtabliſhed? If, of two perſons qualified for communion, one inſiſts on ſuch a thing being done at the communion, another on its being omitted, how is the church to behave? Muſt not the majority determine, and ought not the minority to ſubmit, as far as in conſcience they can? If any member change his mind, muſt the terms of communion be changed as often? But ſuppoſing the majority, with their guide or guides, think rules highly expedient, though not neceſſary, which a minority, diſpoſed to be members, think unlawful, what is to be done? In my opinion ſuch rules ought to be enacted, diſpenſed with, or laid aſide, according to the degree of benefit apprehended from them, or the number of perſons diſſatisfied with them, or various

[m] P. 30.

rious other circumſtances, which may incline prudent perſons one way or another. Here is much room to miſtake; and there ſhould be much charity and mildneſs on both ſides. And indeed, on whatever point the difference is, the diſſatisfied minority ſhould be allowed to form churches for themſelves in the beſt manner they can. And they, who cannot help eſteeming one another hereticks or ſchiſmaticks, (which opinion may be formed, whether juſtly, or wrongfully, without malevolence,) ſhould live together in neighbourly kindneſs, and as much mutual eſteem as they can.

Further, under this ſecond relation, if any be deſirous of being a teacher in the church, he muſt be ſubject to the judgement of its governours, whether he be qualified for that office, *apt to teach*. Chriſtian aſſemblies ought to have ſuch miniſters as will inſtruct them ſuitably to what the people, with the advice of thoſe who are authorized to commiſſion their miniſters, take to be the neceſſary or important doctrines or duties of the Chriſtian profeſſion; to advance their progreſs in Chriſtian knowledge and practice, and to guard them by proper arguments and admonitions againſt the oppoſite errors and ſins. And therefore they have a right to be aſſured, by ſome fit method, as far as may be, that their miniſters are diſpoſed to inſtruct them in this manner. Elſe an epiſcopal proteſtant congregation might be obliged to have a Quaker or a popiſh prieſt for its miniſter. And one fit method of giving ſuch aſſurance is, ſubſcribing articles or confeſſions containing ſuch doctrines and duties. So that to confound baptiſmal confeſſions and miniſterial examinations together, is to perplex the queſtion; unleſs *milk*

and *ſtrong meat* are the ſame thing, and every Chriſtian, who hath faith enough for admiſſion into the church, hath therefore proficiency enough to be an inſtructor in it.

Further yet, as this Chriſtian ſociety muſt exiſt within the limits of ſome one or more particular ſtate, it bears a third relation to that particular ſtate under which each Chriſtian ſociety ſhall live. If diſcouraged and perſecuted by it, ſtill the members of this ſociety are commanded to *obey the magiſtrates — ſuffer wrong — pray for them — and pay them tribute:* if protected by them, they are *rather to do them ſervice, becauſe they are faithful*; and in return to the ſtate for its protection and encouragement, the church, or that Chriſtian ſociety ſo protected and encouraged, ought particularly to inculcate ſuch goſpel truths as the ſtate thinks the occaſions and circumſtances of the times particularly require. But to infer from Chriſt's ſpiritual kingdom, that the civil magiſtrate hath no right to expect this ſervice from a church, or Chriſtian ſociety, protected by him; and that his Chriſtian ſubjects ought not to pay it, becauſe Chriſt is their only lawgiver, is to confound all the three relations; and to conclude from a man's being accountable to Chriſt only for his faith and obedience, that *therefore* we muſt not believe and practiſe ſome doctrines of Chriſt, *becauſe* the church recommends them when occaſions peculiarly call for our attention to them; and *leſt* ſuch belief and practice ſhould be of ſervice to the magiſtrate and the peace of the community. Surely thoſe who would ſubſcribe to the whole bible, unleſs they meant by ſuch general ſubſcription to evade the doctrines taught in it, can have no objection to ſubſcribe any part of it.

And

And when the ſtate is become Chriſtian, it may, on finding the generality of Chriſtian churches within it to be ſuch as it approves, and to be willing that the ſtate ſhould, for the ſake of order and uniformity, exerciſe in their behalf a proper ſhare of the powers which they had hitherto exerciſed ſeparately amongſt themſelves, it may form them into a national church, on nearly the ſame conditions of communion and miniſtry which they had practiced before. And if it partly ſettles on the miniſters, and partly allows private perſons to ſettle on them, a competent allowance, where is the injury done? And why may not the whole body of the people be conſidered as conſenting to ſuch an eccleſiaſtical eſtabliſhment, as well as to the civil eſtabliſhment, though they may think that ſeveral things in both might be mended? If they think there are things in the former, with which they cannot in conſcience comply, they will ſtill be at liberty to diſſent from you. You have joined together, in one, two ſuppoſitions quite unconnected, as if they were inſeparable. *If*, ſay you, *the church of England hath a right to fix her own terms of communion, and in conſequence of that to ſecure the obedience of her members by temporal rewards and puniſhments*[n] — But how can a right to the latter be the conſequence of a right to the former? The terms of communion with a national church may be fixed and eſtabliſhed by law: yet no perſon be rewarded for complying with them, or puniſhed for not complying with them, or ſubjected to any diſadvantages on account of them. By ſome of the payments made by diſſenters to the ſupport of our eſtabliſhed church, they are few or none of them ſufferers, becauſe they

 bought

[n] P. 28.

bought the eſtates, out of which they make thoſe payments, ſo much the cheaper; or if they were given them, they had no right to them without the burthen upon them. The legiſlature lays the reſt of the payment on them for what it not only takes to be beneficial, but what really is beneficial to the publick; as undoubtedly ſo good an eſtabliſhed religion as ours will be owned to be on the whole, even by ſuch as in ſome points diſſent from it. If tribute, which includes the publick charges of religion, was to be paid by Chriſtians to their pagan princes, will they refuſe it to Chriſtian princes for the ſervices of Chriſtian religion? They cannot expect the legiſlature to eſtabliſh any mode of it but what the community approves moſt: and therefore all ſhould not only acquieſce in the maintenance of it, but think it an advantage. It may alſo in ſome caſes, and in ours, be an advantage, not only to the publick, but in the end to diſſenters themſelves, that they are reſtrained from publick offices, to prevent the dangers of ſuch evils as have happened, of a much more grievous nature than this reſtraint can be. Or, ſuppoſing it a diſadvantage to them; yet many perſons are reſtrained in many caſes from what they have by nature an equal claim to with others, for the ſake of an apprehended greater good to the community, ariſing or expected from it. In all theſe caſes a legiſlature may miſtake; and ſo may they who think it miſtakes. When miſtakes are evidently diſcovered, they ſhould be rectified: but while a doubt remains, the preſumption lies on the ſide of the legiſlature. And ſuppoſing it to be wrong, perſons ought to be content with leſs than Utopian perfection.

But

But it muſt be further obſerved, that ſuch reſtraints, even ſuppoſing them blameable, are no more puniſhments in eccleſiaſtical than in civil caſes. They are only precautions; and, with us, gentle ones, whether prudent or not. Precautions imply only a danger; puniſhments a crime. The former ought always to be moderate; the latter juſt. Puniſhing a perſon for acting according to the judgement of his conſcience, when he doth no injury, publick or private, is unjuſt: and though it were not, yet puniſhing him for it, even when he doth injury, beyond the exigency of the caſe, would be unjuſt. It may be ſaid indeed, that if a man hath a right to do another any wrong, he hath an equal right to do him a greater; and ſubtle arguments may be brought to prove it. But plain common ſenſe will not readily admit ſuch a maxim: nor will human ſociety be in a better condition by eſtabliſhing it: for, in conſequence of it, the lawfulneſs of great ſeverities will be much oftener concluded from that of ſmall ones, than the unlawfulneſs of ſmall ones from that of great ones. And therefore it is not a diſcrete plea, that *if the church of England may ſecure herſelf by temporal penalties*, however ſlight, *the church of Portugal may ſecure herſelf by tortures and death.*°

But all that your wanderings have led and forced me to ſay concerning diſſenters from the communion of a church, is wide from the ſpecial point propoſed by you, the terms of admiſſion to the miniſtry in a church. To that therefore I return: and having already ſhewn, that there is a right of fixing theſe both in particular and national churches, I need only add, that excluding a man from being a miniſter in a congregation, where

° P. 29.

where he hath no right to be one, is *not puniſhing* him: for though he ſpent his time and his pains with a view to it, he knew all the while that his proſpect was but conditional. And though admitting him is indeed *rewarding* him, as the labourer is rewarded by his hire, ſurely it is not unequitable, that the people, or the publick, ſhould give a recompence to one, who in their opinion promotes right notions and practice, while they refuſe it to one who in their opinion labors to miſlead them.

But I procede to examine your objections againſt *eſtabliſhed confeſſions, as teſts of orthodoxy.* You lay down *the fundamental poſition, on which the authority of eſtabliſhed confeſſions in proteſtant communions depends*, in theſe words: *Every particular church, conſidered as a ſociety, has a right, as other ſocieties have, to ſecure its own peace and welfare, by all lawful means; and conſequently, to preſcribe ſuch terms of communion as appear to be moſt expedient for the purpoſe; provided that nothing be required, under this pretence, which is contrary to the word of God, or inconſiſtent with the liberty of other churches.* And againſt this fundamental poſition you ſay it hath been anſwered in ſhort, that *by admitting the principle of ſelf-defence and ſelf-preſervation in matters of religion, all the perſecutions of the heathens againſt the Chriſtians, and even the popiſh inquiſition, may be juſtified.*[p] And here you refer us to biſhop Hoadley's ſpeech in Rapin; where we ſhall find juſt theſe very words, and not one word more. Therefore, as I pay no implicit obedience to his judgement, whatever you may, I take the liberty of inſiſting, that this ſhort anſwer comes very ſhort of being a good one: For theſe are *unlawful* means: and you yourſelf

[p] Confeſſ. chap. ii. p. 28.

yourſelf have ſtated our principle to be only that we may defend ourſelves by *lawful* means, *not contrary to the word of God:* Therefore our principle will not juſtify theſe; unleſs you ſuppoſe that heathen perſecutions and popiſh inhumanities are agreeable to the word of God. You go on, and ſay, *If the church of England hath a right to ſecure the obedience of her members by temporal rewards and penalties, the church of Portugal may ſecure herſelf by the diſcipline of an* holy office.[q] We do not affirm, but abſolutely deny, that the obedience of the members of our church is to be ſecured by temporal rewards and penalties: neither is it true, or will neceſſarily follow, that wherever the latter of theſe may be juſtly inflicted, there tortures and death may. Surely, ſir, you ſhould have taken a little more pains to make out the connexion between refuſing orders and benefices to perſons unleſs they will ſubſcribe, and putting them to death unleſs they will believe and do whatever they are bid: for it is not a plain one by any means.

You complain that biſhop Conybeare, in his famous ſubſcription ſermon, has paſſed *a fallacy* upon us in arguing *from the conſent required by the apoſtles to* their *doctrines, to the conſent required by ſucceeding church governours to* human *articles.*[r] Biſhop Conybeare hath ſhewn, *in his famous ſubſcription ſermon*, that ſome ſcripture truths not only *may*, but *muſt* be expreſſed in other than ſcripture terms:[s] and till you have diſproved his reaſons, I muſt have leave to ſay, that *ſuch human* articles (as you are pleaſed to call them) require the ſame conſent to them as to the apoſtles doctrines, becauſe they contain the ſame ſcripture truths. The authority which demands the conſent

[q] Ibid. [r] Note at p. 30. [s] P. 8, 9.

ſent is neither that of the church's explication, nor that of the apoſtles; but *the word of God which we receive from them, we receive it not as the word of men, but indeed (as it is in truth,) as the word of God.*[t]

In another note you tell us, by way of improvement upon honeſt old Rogers, as you call him, *that every intelligent Chriſtian, with the ſcriptures before him, is, upon proteſtant principles, and in decrees of this nature,* a church to himſelf.[u] I cannot, as I obſerved before, make any good ſenſe of this odd expreſſion, *a church to himſelf*; no, not by ſuch proteſtant principles as you yourſelf laid down at page 2, where you ſay *the church is congregated by the word of God*; for how can an individual be congregated with himſelf? But whatever your meaning be, if every intelligent Chriſtian, with the ſcriptures before him, *be a church to himſelf*, a great number of intelligent Chriſtians, with the ſcriptures before them, judging and embracing certain truths, as contained in thoſe ſcriptures, are a *church to themſelves:* and if, according to *honeſt old Rogers*, whoſe judgement you recommend to us,[w] they are to avoid and reprove antichriſtianity and error, they muſt avoid the communion of any man whom they judge antichriſtian and erroneous, and leave him to the communion of that church, which he himſelf alone makes. If you mean no more by that paradoxical expreſſion, than that he ought to determine for himſelf, it is true; but this reſpects only his ſpiritual relation betwixt Chriſt and his own ſoul, and is previous to his relation as member of a church: yet even then, in determining, he ought to allow ſome weight and

[t] 1 Theſſ. xi. 13. [u] P. 31, note.
[w] Cath. Doctr. Art. xx. Prop. 3.

and authority to the judgement of the church, as men ſkilled in the ſcience they profeſs; and greater in proportion as he hath cauſe to think himſelf unqualified for judging. Thus perſons of ſenſe do in all other caſes: and private judgement is very conſiſtent with ſuch deference to authority. Biſhop Burnet hath not, as you ſay, *faintly inſinuated*, but clearly ſtated, his ſenſe of this matter, which is the true one. The proper diſpoſitions, which he requires for bodies of men to judge rightly, are ſincerity, diligence, and deſire of God's direction. You think it *may be as difficult to find a body of men ſo diſpoſed, as to find ſingle perſons without miſtakes.* Now there never was a ſingle perſon without miſtakes. Did no body of men, ſincere, diligent, and pious, that is, the majority of them, ever meet? Or would the agreement of ſuch a majority in any doctrines, after debate, be likely to produce greater and more errors, than the ſame men, without conſultation had together, publiſhing ſeverally their reſpective miſtakes and prejudices?

You ſay, if the church's *authority were vigorouſly exerted and applied in* all *caſes, (as it ought to be if the authority be* real,) *and if, on the other hand, the people were diligent and careful in ſearching the ſcriptures every one for himſelf, (as all proteſtants agree they ought to do,) the conſequence would moſt probably be, that the far greater part of honeſt and ſenſible Chriſtians would be excluded from the communion of every church which has an eſtabliſhed confeſſion.*[x] The church's authority, of which you ſpeak, is that of *framing and ſettling confeſſions of faith and doctrine for all her members*; and inſtead of exerting and vigorouſly applying it in all caſes, ſhe ought to exert it in none where ſhe

[x] Confeſſ. p. 32.

ſhe is not commiſſioned. There are numberleſs queſtions in which the church hath no right to decide, or give her judgement: but ſhe ought to give it, and act upon it, in caſes to which the ſcriptures direct, admiſſion to baptiſm, and commiſſion to teach: in theſe caſes ſhe thinks ſhe hath a right to exerciſe this authority; for Chriſt having commanded his apoſtles to *go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt*; [y] and ſaid that *he that believeth and is baptized ſhall be ſaved*; [z] they infer that *belief* is a qualification for admiſſion to baptiſm; that the candidate for baptiſm, if a capable ſubject, is to give a ſatisfactory account of his faith before he can be admitted into the church, for which there muſt be ſome rule of judging; and that inſtruction in the neceſſary points muſt therefore ordinarily go before belief, though it be ſubmitted to the private judgement of the candidate; and then *if he believes, he may be baptized.* [a] A ſcriptural right they alſo think they have, in trying the qualifications of every one who is a candidate for the paſtoral office, being directed to *lay hands ſuddenly on no man*; [b] to *prove* him whether he be *apt to teach, holding faſt the faithful word, as he hath been taught, that he may be able by ſound doctrine, both to exhort and to convince the gainſayers.* [c] Of this therefore they who are to give the commiſſion are to judge. And if this be done in forms generally agreed on and publickly known, it is rather an exertion of *kindneſs* in the church than of *authority*, to which none are compelled to ſubſcribe; but ſuch as are convinced, and do it *willingly* and *ex animo* are allowed to be qualified as teachers, and

[y] Matth. xxviii. 19. [z] Mark xvi. 16.
[a] Acts viii. 37. [b] 1 Tim. iii. 1, 10. [c] Tit. i. 9.

and are not ſubjected to the arbitrary judgement or caprice of the examiner. Such church authority, in both inſtances, is only one motive to believe the doctrines which ſhe profeſſes; and each perſon will apply it to aſſiſt his own judgement, as far as he thinks it needful and right. And theſe eſtabliſhed confeſſions (of which the apoſtle's creed is one) muſt have been very unfortunately formed, if they would have excluded the far greater part of honeſt and ſenſible Chriſtians from the communion of every church in Chriſtendom. But I rather fear that many of thoſe whom you call *honeſt and ſenſible Chriſtians* would not have been deemed or thought Chriſtians at all, not having faith ſufficient to qualify them for baptiſm by the univerſal judgement of the whole church of Chriſt.

You indeed *believe there is ſcarce one of theſe confeſſions, to which a knowing and a thinking Chriſtian can aſſent in all points.*[d] It is well that we are not bound to believe as you believe; for under the term *theſe confeſſions* the apoſtles creed muſt be comprehended, which ſhews that this condemnation is preſumptuous enough. And if you are one of theſe *honeſt and ſenſible, knowing and thinking* Chriſtians, as I ſuppoſe you conceive yourſelf to be, what but the ſpirit of contradiction, which ſo violently poſſeſſes you, could move you to be ſo angry with *a certain writer in the Daily Gazeteer of Sept.* 30, 1766, *for pronouncing, that the author of the Confeſſional cannot, conſiſtently with his principles, be a member of any eſtabliſhed church.*[e] Methinks you ſhould rather have taken it for a compliment: though I by no means think it one. If this cenſure is falſe, how do you prove that you are, conſiſtently with your own principles, a member

[d] Confeſſ. p. 34. [e] Note at p. 32.

member of any eſtabliſhed church? You do not attempt it: but labor to excuſe yourſelf for not being ſo. You ſpeak (preface, p. 1.) of a great prelate, as *vulnerable only in point of his conformity to the church of England.* You ſay in your book, p. 244. that *conſiſtency requires the opponents of the high-churchmen to withdraw from the church of England, and bear their teſtimony againſt her in deeds, as well as words.* You endeavour to ſhew, throughout your whole book, that eſtabliſhed churches, as ſuch, are unlawful. Of which of them then can you, *conſiſtently* with your principles, be a member? And how is merely affirming that you cannot, a *fulminating cenſure?* But you are ſo apt to fulminate cenſures againſt others, that you fancy nobody can mean to treat you with mildneſs. On this occaſion you introduce (for what purpoſe I cannot ſee, unleſs it be to enable you to ſneer at a perſon of whom you know nothing,) a ſaying of lord Clarendon, 'He who 'will profeſs all the opinions held by the moſt 'ancient fathers, and obſerve all that was prac-'ticed in the primitive times, cannot be of the 'communion of any one church in the world.' Eſſay, fol. 1727, p. 226. What his lordſhip particularly meant, or whether he ſaid true, or miſtook, is not worth inquiring. You are certainly ſecure from being excommunicated on the account which he mentions, and have not been threatened on any other. You go on to ſay that you *profeſs cordially to believe whatſoever the apoſtles taught, and are deſirous to obſerve whatever was practiſed in the firſt Chriſtian churches ſettled by them, ſo far as you can diſcover it in the ſcriptures.* So do we. Which underſtands them beſt, the reader muſt be left to judge. *They* required belief before baptiſm, and for that purpoſe interrogated

gated the candidates: *they* required paſtors ſhould be *proved*, whether they were *apt to teach*, before they were commiſſioned to preach: *We* do the ſame. The particular forms of confeſſion, or probation, which they uſed, we know not; but we have taken care to preſerve thoſe which we can diſcover from the earlieſt antiquity, or, in imitation of the apoſtles, when new doubts aroſe, to determine them, not by private judgement ſingly, but in due conjunction with the deliberating judgement of the governours of the church. *You* deny that any confeſſion, or any determination, ſhould be made, but every man be left to determine for himſelf; and on ſuch determination to claim baptiſm and orders. Who is the moſt apoſtolical?

But perſons thus admitted to baptiſm or orders, in your opinion, are not *honeſt and ſenſible Chriſtians*; for *the adherence of ſuch numbers to the peculiar doctrines of the church from which they receive their denomination, and even to ſome doctrines common to the creeds and confeſſions of* ALL *churches, which call themſelves orthodox, is owing to their* IGNORANCE, *their* INDOLENCE, *their* SECULARITY, *or the early* PREJUDICES *of education.*[f] Such is the charity of *a knowing and thinking Chriſtian!* Such the peremptory deciſion of an advocate for freedom of thinking, and latitude of interpretation, that all who think or interpret ſcripture differently from himſelf are knaves or fools! I thank God, however you may be *a church to yourſelf*, that you yourſelf are not the eſtabliſhed church, with as much power to *puniſh*, as you aſſume to *judge and determine* of others.

You aſſert, that inferring an authority in the church to eſtabliſh confeſſions, from the indiſpoſi-

[f] Confeſſ. p. 34.

tions and incapacities of the people to examine and judge for themſelves, is an argument that *would equally vindicate the church of Rome with reſpect to many of her impoſitions.*[g] I anſwer: We allow and inſiſt that the people have a capacity of examining and judging, but a capacity which wants aſſiſtance, as that of moſt perſons doth in moſt caſes: and if not in this, teachers of religion are needleſs. Now ſelecting out of ſcripture, and propoſing the fundamental articles of faith and practice for the people, and requiring the profeſſion of ſuch further truths for miniſters as are highly uſeful for them to teach, though not abſolutely neceſſary for all to believe, is an uſeful method of aſſiſting both. And the right of doing this cannot vindicate the church of Rome in requiring things to be declared neceſſary or true, which the ſcripture hath not declared to be ſuch. Nor indeed do I ſee, how preſerving in the church a ſmall number of indifferent ceremonies can vindicate, or even excuſe, the church of Rome in having introduced ſo monſtrous a load of obſervances, many of them ſingly very improper: or how, on the other hand, rejecting the moſt and lateſt of them ſhews the neceſſity of rejecting the few that were early. One of our firſt Engliſh reformers, who had Chriſtian fortitude enough to die for his perſeverance in oppoſing unſcriptural impoſitions of doctrines, ſaith of this latter ſort, 'If it were only one trifling ceremony, or if it 'were ſome one thing of itſelf indifferent, (al-'though I could wiſh nothing ſhould be done in 'the church which did not edify the ſame) yet, 'for the continuance of the common quietneſs, 'I could be content to bear with it.'[h] And ſurely

[g] Ibid. [h] Conference with Latimer, Obj. 4.

ſurely he might, with equal reaſon, have ſaid the ſame thing concerning two or three.

You go on to ſay, *Indiſpoſitions and incapacities in the clergy would be but an aukward reaſon for making their aſſent and ſubſcription to confeſſions an indiſpenſable condition of being admitted into the church as teachers.*[j] The indiſpoſitions and incapacities of the people to examine and judge for themſelves without help are certainly a good reaſon for the governours of the church to recommend a form of doctrine for their inſtruction; and that will evince the neceſſity, without ſuppoſing like indiſpoſitions and incapacities in the clergy, of recommending to the teachers the ſame form of doctrine, as a direction for their inſtructing the people committed to their charge. St. Paul beſeeches the people, *that ye all ſpeak the ſame thing, and that there be no diviſions among you.*[k] For this *end* he preſcribes theſe *means* to the clergy, that *they charge ſome* (ſuſpected of unſoundneſs in the faith) *that they teach no other doctrine.*[l] *Take heed unto thyſelf, and to thy doctrine.*[m] *Theſe things command and teach.*[n] *Theſe things teach and exhort.*[o] *Hold faſt the form of ſound words, which thou haſt heard of me.*[p] Did St. Paul ſuppoſe Timothy *indiſpoſed* or *incapable?* Did he not give this charge as the beſt means by which the paſtors and teachers might *edify the body of Chriſt, till we all come in the* UNITY OF THE FAITH, *and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man.*[q]

You complain that *the* teſt act *brings many men to our altars, who would never come there of choice,*

[j] Confeſſ. p. 34, 35. [k] 1 Cor. i. 10.
[l] 1 Tim. i. 3. [m] iv. 16. [n] iv. 11.
[o] vi. 2. [p] 2 Tim, i. 13. [q] Epheſ. iv. 12, 13.

or on a religious account.[r] It brings no one. It only forbids thoſe to have places who do not come. And ſo doth requiring the oaths of allegiance and ſupremacy forbid thoſe to have places who will not take them. But if bad men take the ſacrament, or Jacobites the oaths, nothing but their own wickedneſs brings them to do it. As to the mention that was made of ſome Jews in K. William's reign coming to our Chriſtian altars to qualify themſelves for naturalization, the London Magazine is not authority to prove, that any ſuch mention was made by any body; and falſhoods are often mentioned as true. Yet ſuppoſing the fact, it would only prove that ſuch Jews were bad men. We know oaths are every day impoſed to prevent frauds in the revenues: it is ſaid they are often broken, and perjury added to cover frauds. If ſuch oaths and the Teſt Act, in the event, prove to be ſnares and temptations, one would wiſh them removed, provided ſome other ſecurity were ſubſtituted. But diſcharging the clergy from obligations to inſtruct the people and the people's conſciences in the doctrines of our church, and leaving all men at liberty to take orders and benefices in it, and teach what they pleaſe, will, I apprehend, be no ſufficient remedy of theſe evils.

Certain it is, in ſo far as the laity are allowed not to be bound by theſe church confeſſions, the point of right *to eſtabliſh them, as teſts of orthodoxy, is fairly given up, as well for the clergy as the laity — unleſs the clergyman may be obliged to teach doctrines which the layman is not obliged either to believe or practice.*[s] That is, becauſe the layman is not bound to believe and practice certain things as terms of communion, the clergyman ſhould not be

[r] Note, at p. 36. [s] Confeſſ. p. 36, 37.

be bound to teach them as truths of importance. Yet evidently, if they are truths of real and great importance, of which the preſiding power in each church muſt judge for itſelf, the clergyman ſhould be examined whether he believes them; and if he doth not, he ſhould not be admitted to teach in that church; and if he doth, he ſhould teach ſuitably to what he hath profeſſed. Nor are the people free from obligation in regard to ſuch points. They are bound, not indeed to believe all that he ſaith, but to hear and conſider, and believe all that they find reaſon to be perſuaded is true. Both perhaps are encouraged to their reſpective duties, by being thereby rendered capable of emoluments in the ſtate. And it muſt be owned that, for the ſake of emoluments, hypocrites and villains, Jews, Turks, infidels, and hereticks, may ſubſcribe, or give the ſtrongeſt outward proof of believing what is required: but neither church nor ſtate are anſwerable for their impiety: they have taken all the prudent care in their power, and the guilty, convicted only by their own conſciences, muſt be left to the final judgement of Chriſt. So that, *in foro conſcientiæ*, whatever the clergyman is obliged by the word of God to teach, the layman is obliged by the word of God to believe and practice, ſo far as he hath the means of learning it, and being convinced of it. But a man may, without forfeiting his title to communion or ſalvation, miſtake or be ignorant of ſeveral things, which yet, both for the honor and edification of the church, a miniſter may be ſo far obliged to teach, that he may be juſtly required to declare his belief of them, as an aſſurance that he will not contradict, but inculcate them. One who believes that there is a purgatory, that clergymen ought not to marry, that capital

punishments, war, and oaths are unlawful, may receive the sacrament and go to heaven. But a candidate for orders or preferment may with reason be repelled, if he refuses to declare himself on these heads, because very bad consequences would follow, if he were to preach false doctrine concerning them, or even omit to preach the true, on proper occasions. And therefore Mr. La Roche might well commend the wisdom of our national church in this respect.

Whatever may be left to the prudence and discretion of church-governours, there is so much more *left to the conscience of every Christian in his personal capacity, that it greatly behoves such governours to beware they encroach not on a province which is without their limits.*[t] Here you seem to admit that something is left to the prudence of church governours. There are general directions in scripture concerning the trial of teachers, and the soundness of their faith: but general directions must be followed by such particular methods as appear most expedient. And this needs not interfere *with the conscience of any Christian in his personal capacity.* Expedients of human prudence should indeed be used with great moderation: but this proves not that they should not be used at all.

The subscription required of candidates for orders, which you particularly instance as *unseasonably interfering with the dictates of other mens consciences*,[u] is designed to prevent diversity of opinions as far as *they should* be prevented, and subscription *can* prevent them. How many subscribe in different senses, and how many in no sense but that of wanting preferment, you cannot know; and you might just as well have said

[t] Confess. p. 39. [u] Confess. p. 42.

ſaid one tenth, or one third, as one fifth. Certainly teaching different opinions is leſſened by ſubſcription: and were there no ſubſcription, ſtill too many, indeed more, would go into orders merely for preferment.

No church can have a right *to eſtabliſh any doctrines, but upon the ſuppoſition that they are* true.[w] That is, in the judgement of the eſtabliſhers they muſt be ſuppoſed to be true: but from the fallibility of their judgement they may in fact be otherwiſe. Yet this will not deſtroy their right to uſe their judgement in this caſe. If religion be neceſſary to a ſtate, the rulers of the ſtate muſt give it publick ſupport; but in ſuch manner as to injure no one. They can ſupport religion no otherwiſe than by ſupporting what they, in their reſpective ſtates, think the true one. If they miſtake which that is, they will make a wrong *exerciſe* of their right. In ſtrictneſs of ſpeech, no man hath a right to do wrong: yet a man, having a right to make a will, may *legally* make a very unreaſonable and blameable one. And a judge, having a right to paſs ſentence in a cauſe, may *legally* paſs a very erroneous one. He hath authority, and it is his duty to decree according to the beſt of his underſtanding. If he errs, it is a misfortune incident to the preſent ſtate of things: if he doth not decide according to the beſt of his ability, God will puniſh him. And the like is the caſe of rulers in regard to religion. They have no power to require from others the profeſſion of religious doctrines, which thoſe others do not believe. This would be invading the moſt ſacred of all privileges. But they have a rightful power to attract the notice of their ſubjects to ſuch doctrines as they think important to the pub-

[w] Confeſſ. p. 52.

lick, by providing that they ſhall be publickly taught; and to ſee that the perſons whom they employ for teachers be, as far as can be known, really diſpoſed to teach them. Whether they aſſure themſelves of this, by ſubſcriptions to an eſtabliſhed form of words, or by declarations made by each of them in his own words, is not eſſentially different: though the former ſeems to be the more equal method, and leſs liable to abuſe, both on the ſide of candidates for orders or benefices, and of thoſe who admit them. The legiſlature doth not in either caſe *impoſe* a confeſſion of belief on the perſons concerned, as Dr. Stebbing hath long ago ſhewn, but only informs itſelf, ſo far as is needful, what their belief is, in order to know whether they are in that reſpect fit for the office to which they deſire to be admitted.

If the doctrines eſtabliſhed in one are true, *the contrary doctrines eſtabliſhed in another church muſt be* falſe; *and I preſume no church will contend for a right to eſtabliſh* falſe *doctrines: —— in conſequence, none had a right to eſtabliſh any doctrines, but with the unanimous conſent of all the reſt.** Now, ſir, you have elſewhere told us, that every intelligent Chriſtian, with the ſcriptures before him, is, upon proteſtant principles, and in decrees of this nature, *a church to himſelf*; by which I underſtood you to mean, that every perſon may judge for himſelf, and believe as he ſees cauſe. Let us then only ſubſtitute *intelligent Chriſtian* in the place of *church*, and *believe* for *eſtabliſh*, and then judge of the truth and reaſoning of the above paſſage. 'No intelligent Chriſtian can have a 'right to believe any doctrines but upon ſuppo'ſition that they are true. If the doctrines be-

'lieved

* P. 52, 53.

'lieved by one intelligent Chriſtian be *true*, the 'contrary doctrines believed by another intelli-'gent Chriſtian muſt be *falſe*; and I preſume no 'intelligent Chriſtian will contend for a right to 'believe *falſe* doctrines. — In conſequence, no 'intelligent Chriſtians have a right to believe any 'doctrines, but with the unanimous conſent of 'all the reſt.' And what now becomes of the right of private judgement? and would not the conſequence be, that we ſhould have no right to believe any thing?

It is true, proteſtants of one ſtate or country have been tender of condemning the confeſſion of thoſe of another, by any publick ſentence. —— *But what inſtance is there upon record, where this liberty* (I ſuppoſe you mean the liberty of framing a confeſſion of faith for itſelf) *hath been allowed (as the ordinate principle manifeſtly requires it ſhould be) to more than* one *church in the* ſame *proteſtant ſtate?*[y] If the confeſſion of any one ſtate or country is not condemned as contrary to ſcripture, the minority in ſuch ſtate ought to ſubmit and aſſent to the confeſſion of it. Yet the ſtate of England, from the firſt eſtabliſhment of her confeſſion, can afford an inſtance, where the liberty of diſſenting from it has been allowed to the French, Dutch, and Italian proteſtant churches, in the beginning of its reformation; and to ſeveral diſſenting congregations (among her own ſubjects) at this day.

Every party, in every proteſtant ſtate, has, by turns, made ſome attempts to have their religious tenets eſtabliſhed by publick authority. In every ſtate ſome one *party has ſucceeded; and having ſucceeded, impoſes its own confeſſion upon all the reſt; excluding all diſſenters from more or fewer of the common privileges*

[y] Confeſ. p. 54.

vileges of citizens.[z] The common privileges of citizens are protection of lives, liberties, and property: to places of truſt, influence, honor, and profit, none can be intitled, but upon the terms of the community. If then there be a party attempting to have their religious tenets eſtabliſhed by publick authority, who, although, *ex hypotheſi*, they do not condemn the confeſſion now eſtabliſhed, yet will never be contented, in the opinion of one of their own friends, (Rapin, in his diſſertation on Whigs and Tories) till they have totally deſtroyed the whole church of England, and have given proof of it in their ſolemn league and covenant; all lovers of truth, peace, and religious liberty, muſt endeavour to reſtrain ſuch intolerant diſturbers of the publick tranquillity, within ſuch bounds as not to leave them the power of trampling on the common rights of mankind, by deſtroying our preſent happy conſtitution. You acknowledge, (p. 55, in the note,) that the Weſtminſter confeſſion, which hath all along been the favorite preſbyterian one, aſcribes the ſame authority to the church, that the firſt part of our 20th article doth. And though ſeveral of the diſſenting miniſters, in 1727, refuſed to ſubſcribe that confeſſion, it doth not appear that they ſcrupled this part of it. And therefore you have no right to *acquit* them, while you *condemn* us: but we have ground to apprehend, that had they power, we ſhould ſuffer at leaſt as much, perhaps a great deal more, from their exerciſe of church authority, than they do now from ours. You give us another inſtance of Calviniſtical intolerance, at the ſynod of Dort, in baniſhing the remonſtrants.[a] This, however intended, is no cenſure on the church of England, which

[z] Ibid. [a] Confeſſ. p. 56.

which diſclaims their principles and their practice.

But *churchmen complain in adverſity, who in the day of their exaltation carried church power as far as it could ſtretch:* as an inſtance of this, you produce *the ingenious biſhop Taylor*, who aſſerted, *againſt the taſk maſters of thoſe days*, (in 1647,) *that* 'if we have found out what foundation Chriſt 'and his apoſtles did lay, that is, what body and 'ſyſtem of articles ſimply neceſſary they taught and 'required of us to believe; we need not, we cannot, 'go any further for foundation; WE CANNOT ENLARGE THAT SYSTEM OR COLLECTION.' *But when the ſhattered veſſel came to be refitted* —— what did the ingenious biſhop Taylor do then? — why nothing — but *the ſkilful pilots adopted the old enlarged ſyſtem.*[b] In which repreſentation there ſeems to be wanting both *argument and truth.* There wants *argument*, becauſe *pilots* in 1660 might adopt the enlarged ſyſtem, without any reflection on *biſhop Taylor*, who thought juſtly in 1647; unleſs he had been one of thoſe pilots, and had changed his ſentiments, with the change of circumſtances. But neither did he change his ſentiments, nor did the pilots in their day of exaltation act contrary to his ſentiments in adverſity; which deſtroys the *truth* of your repreſentation. In the paſſage to which you refer, he does not recommend *the ſcriptures at large*, as the foundation of neceſſary belief, (there being more things revealed in them than it is neceſſary for all men to know;) but a *ſyſtem* of neceſſary truths collected from it, *the apoſtle's creed*, which he makes the *teſſera* of a Chriſtian, to which the very words you quote refer, *We cannot enlarge* THAT SYSTEM OR COLLECTION. Yet in that very

[b] Confeſſ. p. 55, and note.

very treatiſe, written under *the taſk-maſters of thoſe days*, 'he doubts not but our bleſſed Sa-'viour intended,' (from the inſtance of the Jeruſalem council,) 'that the aſſemblies of the 'church ſhould be judges of controverſies, and 'guides of our perſuaſions in matters of 'difficulty,' [c] —— 'in order to the conſervation 'of the faith, for the doctrinal rules of good 'life, and all that concerns the eſſential duty of 'a Chriſtian.' [d] That, 'when acts and doctrine 'have influence upon communities of men, whe-'ther eccleſiaſtical or civil, the governours of the 'republique or church reſpectively are to do their 'duties in reſtraining thoſe miſchiefs —— The 'procedings indeed may be *fallible*, upon an *in-'fallible* ground, and they may do their duty 'poſſibly with the piety of a ſaint, though not 'with the underſtanding of an angel.' [e] Nor did he alter his ſentiments *in the day of his exaltation*; for he maintains the ſame opinions in his *Ductor Dubitantium* in 1660. He calls the apoſtles creed 'the fulneſs of believers, the cha-'racteriſtick of Chriſtians, the ſign of the ortho-'dox, the ſword of all hereſies, and their ſuffi-'cient reproof, the unity of belief, ſufficient, 'full, immoveable, unalterable.' [f] That before 'princes were Chriſtian, the church was governed 'by their ſpiritual guides, who had authority 'from God, in all that was *neceſſary*, and of '*great conveniency* next to neceſſity: —— in that 'which was not primely neceſſary, but emer-'gently and contingently came to be *uſeful and fit*, 'God only left in his miniſters a power to per-'ſuade, . . . and gave to the people the ſpirit of 'love and obedience. —— But when princes be-'came

[c] Liberty of Proph. §. vi. p. 101. [d] P. 103.
[e] P. 210, 211. [f] Book ii. p. 514.

'came Chriſtians, . . . and took care of the ex-
'ternal regiment of the church, . . . then the
'eccleſiaſtical laws were adviſed by biſhops, and
'commanded by kings, . . . and all can be
'compelled that need it.'[g] The nautic *wit* of your note may, for ought I can tell, be intirely in the ſtile of a boatſwain; and that I may not ſeem to avoid quoting it from envy, I here recommend it to the reader, that he may not loſe the entertainment, nor you the reputation of it. I know not how to return it, but by an addreſs *to the veſſel itſelf*, in words at leaſt as delicate as yours; which I can venture to ſay, becauſe they are not my own.

O navis, referunt in mare te novi
Fluctus? —— ſine funibus
Vix durare carinæ
Poſſunt imperioſius
Æquor. ——
—— *Tu, niſi ventis*
Debes ludibrium, cave.
HOR. lib. i. od. xiv.

CHAP. III. The opinion of the remonſtrants concerning confeſſions of faith, altho' they had ſuffered grievouſly by one unwarrantably injoined, is the ſubject of your third chapter; which you begin with obſerving, that *it had been objected to confeſſions in general, that they derogated from the authority and ſufficiency of the ſcriptures.*'[h] But is this true of ſuch confeſſions as make *the ſufficiency of the holy ſcriptures for ſalvation* one of their articles, and eſtabliſh its authority ſo far, as to aſſert, that *whatſoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not*

[g] Book iii. p. 234, 235. [h] Confeſſ. chap. iii. p. 58.

not to be required of any man, that it ſhould be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requiſite or neceſſary to ſalvation?[l]

Further, it had been objected, *that they encroached upon the liberty of private conſcience.*[k] It is not only the right, but the duty of private conſcience, to hear and judge: but it may, and in ſome caſes muſt, be aſſiſted, or it will not be able to judge at all: *how ſhall they hear without a preacher? and how ſhall they preach except they be ſent?*[l] And ſurely all interpreting and explaning the ſcriptures is not an encroachment on the liberty of private conſcience; for Chriſt himſelf *opened* to his diſciples the ſcriptures, *and expounded unto them in all the ſcriptures the things concerning himſelf.*[m] Perſons, who are ſtrangers to the language in which the ſcriptures were written, muſt have them *tranſlated*; when tranſlated, if the words are uſed in a peculiar ſenſe, and not the cuſtomary one, ſuch words muſt be *interpreted*: when this is done, if the cuſtoms, antiquities, opinions, or hiſtory of former times muſt be explained, before the ordinary reader can judge of the agreement or diſagreement of the ideas which form the truth or falſhood of any propoſition, theſe muſt be *explained* before private conſcience can judge of it: whence I infer, that explications of ſcripture, which in ſome caſes neceſſity demands, and Chriſt's own example warrants, are not always encroachments on the liberty of private judgement. Now one light, in which confeſſions are to be conſidered, is, that they are explications of ſcripture by a number of learned men, concerning ſome of its principal doctrines.

You

[l] Article vi.
[l] Rom. x. 15.
[k] Confeſſ. p. 58.
[m] Luke xxiv. 27, 32.

You indeed tell us, *that they tended to nothing better than ſeparation and ſchiſm.*'[n] But does ſeparation and ſchiſm, occaſioned by a confeſſion, prove that confeſſion to be erroneous? Does not St. Paul, after mentioning ſchiſms, as exiſting among the Corinthians, tell them, that there *muſt alſo be hereſies* amongſt them, *that they which are approved may be made manifeſt?*[o] And if a confeſſion is neceſſary to manifeſt them, why ſhould it not be uſed? Your expedient indeed muſt be allowed an effectual one, that to avoid ſchiſm there ſhould be *no* confeſſion.

But there have been ſo many abuſes in theſe confeſſions, that the remonſtrants, who defend their uſe, you inform us, are obliged to ſet out with ample conceſſions. *Undoubtedly, ſay they,* [the remonſtrants] *thoſe phraſes and forms of ſpeaking, in which God and Chriſt delivered themſelves at firſt, for the inſtruction of unlearned and ordinary men, muſt needs be ſufficient for the inſtruction of Chriſtians in all ſucceeding ages.*[p] Having not ſeen this confeſſion of the remonſtrants, I am forced to take your account of it. But the authority of the conceders, I ſuppoſe, you will not admit as deciſive: the truth of the conceſſion is to be examined. Chriſt delivered many forms and phraſes of ſpeaking, which (beſides that they were firſt ſpoken in Syriack, and afterwards interpreted by the evangeliſts into Greek, and needed further to be tranſlated into the reſpective tongues of unlearned and ordinary men) were ſo myſtically and figuratively expreſſed, that the apoſtles and diſciples did not underſtand them without an explanation: ſome of them appeared to be ſuch *hard ſayings*, that many of his diſciples *went*

[n] Confeſſ. ibid.
[o] 1 Cor. xi. 19.
[p] Confeſſ. ibid.

went back, and walked no more with him.[q] Many things the ſpirit of truth was afterwards to lead them into, which were to be *committed to faithful men, who ſhould be able to teach others alſo.*[r] Theſe truths were the ſame in ſubſtance, though different in expreſſion, called therefore *the apoſtle's doctrine.*[s] For though Peter, Paul, and Luke, preach the ſame doctrine, yet they preach it not in the ſame words: the writings of the two latter diſcover a tincture of their learning, which is not ſo perceivable in thoſe of Peter. Their agreement in doctrine ſerved as a rule, by which other teachers were to guide themſelves, directing the purpoſe, but leaving the expreſſion to be ſuggeſted by the taſte of the ſpeaker, or accommodated to the capacity of the hearer. This doctrine, as to the ſubſtance of it, was to be the means of bringing the hearers to the unity of the faith; and at the ſame time was a teſt by which to try the teachers. According to this doctrine the catechumens were to make their baptiſmal profeſſions, and *profeſs a good profeſſion.*[t] According to this doctrine the teachers were to be proved, whether they *held faſt the faithful word, as they had been taught.*[u] No *forms* of ſuch confeſſion or examination are preſerved in ſcripture, though the *ſubſtance* be there recorded; nor are any of thoſe forms any where to be found, if not in the ancient creeds. Confeſſions therefore may be made, and that not in the very words and phraſes firſt delivered by Chriſt, for they are irrecoverably loſt; but as expounded by Chriſtian teachers. Nor can they always be confined with good effect to thoſe words of the firſt teachers which are recorded in ſcripture: for if perſons ariſe, as confeſſedly perſons have ariſen, who

[q] John vi. 60, 66. [r] 2 Tim. xi. 2. [s] Acts ii.
[t] 1 Tim. vi. 12. [u] Titus i. 9.

who have perverted thoſe words to a wrong meaning, in matters of the greateſt importance, how ſhall we diſcover with whom we may or may not communicate, as ſound Chriſtians, or whom we may or may not appoint for teachers of ſound doctrine, but by trying whether they hold the ſcripture words in what appears to us the true ſenſe? Now this trial can be made only by uſing ſuch phraſes for aſcertaining the ſenſe, as have not hitherto, and we may hope will not, become ambiguous in the mouths of thoſe who uſe them? The need of this method may not immediately happen: and till it doth, ſcripture expreſſions may ſuffice. But when it doth, ſuch confeſſions not only may, but muſt, ſtill continue in the church: and they may be *divine* as to the ſubſtance, though the form may be *human*; and the church cannot *well be* without ſuch human explications, if it is poſſible for it to *be* at all.*

The Remonſtrants, to recover their ground, ſay, . . . It cannot ſeem unprofitable, much leſs unlawful or hurtful, if more *miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt do, by mutual conſent, joint ſtudies and endeavours, . . declare their judgements upon the meanings of ſcripture, and that in certain compoſed forms.*[x] You ſay it *is no eaſy matter to diſcover* the drift of this argument: and ſo ſay I, if what you further ſay be true, that *the Remonſtrants in that paſſage do not mean to inſiſt on the ſuperior influence and authority of* more *miniſters, in the buſineſs of expounding the ſcripture, in compariſon with ſingle paſtors or profeſſors.*[y] But they certainly do mean ſo, when they modeſtly ſay, 'if the explication of a *ſingle* 'paſtor be not unprofitable, the explication of '*more* paſtors cannot ſeem ſo:' and you are ſenſible this is their meaning, by quoting Dr. Stebbing

* See Confeſſ. p. 59. [x] Confeſſ. p. 60. [y] Ibid.

bing to the ſame purpoſe. To which your reply is, that this means, *in plain Engliſh, You will always be ſafeſt with the majority.*[z] And urge, that *upon any ſuppoſition of this nature, the Belgic confeſſion had an authority which rendered* the Remonſtrants *revolt from it inexcuſable.* Both the Remonſtrants and Dr. Stebbing manifeſtly mean, that ſufficient abilities and integrity ſuppoſed, nineteen in twenty agreeing in the ſame interpretation of ſcripture, are more likely to pitch upon the true meaning, than one who ſhould interpret the ſame ſcripture in a different ſenſe. Neither of them exclude a *poſſibility* of error in the majority, only a *leſs likelihood* of erring. Much leſs did they mean to deny, that a packt council, where the leaders had worldly views for their aim, confederated with ignorant, prejudiced, or ſervile compliers, might bring forth a wrong determination: but even then the majority without doors would probably be againſt them. Such conſiderations therefore will not drive men headlong into the eſtabliſhed religion, whatſoever it be. We have ſtill the ſcriptures and our own judgement in caſes plain and evident; and whatever deference we may give, in caſes of doubt and difficulty, to the judgement of learned men in their own profeſſion, (eſpecially to a majority of them,) we are in no danger of ſubmitting to a ſynagogue of Phariſees, or a Turkiſh divan, as they are not compoſed of men ſkilful in thoſe ſcriptures which we make our rule of faith: and the notorious partiality of the council of Trent, and the ſynod of Dort, will incline but few ingenuous inquirers to yield up their own reaſon a ſlave to their determinations. The ſynod of Dort was convened in malice and protected in policy, and came not to examine the truth,

[z] Confeſſ. p. 60.

truth, but to puniſh the Remonſtrants; themſelves acknowledging, that they came not to diſpute, but to condemn.[a] And having a decree of admiſſion written before they came into the ſynod, they aſked the foreign divines their judgement, hoping it would have been anſwerable to their decree; but finding it was otherwiſe, without ſo much as laying their heads together for conſultation, they publiſhed the decree which they had before prepared; as Mr. Hales of Eton relates it, who attended that ſynod.[b] From ſuch prejudice, I preſume, you will think a revolt not wholly inexcuſable.

You aſk, *If the ſcriptures are opened and explaned to the people in eaſy and familiar expreſſions, by their ordinary paſtors, what poſſible uſe can you find for a ſyſtematical confeſſion?*[c] The uſe of giving greater aſſurance both to the governours of the church and the people, that the ſcriptures are rightly explaned to them.

Miniſters are full as likely to be fallible in a body, as in their perſonal capacity.[d] Reaſons againſt this aſſertion have been given before. It may not be improper to ſtrengthen thoſe reaſons by the opinion of the primitive Chriſtians, eſpecially as you declare your aſſent to the practice of the apoſtolical times. Theſe thought otherwiſe than you do, even when their miniſters were the inſpired apoſtles themſelves; for, diſſatisfied with the judgement of Barnabas and Paul about a certain queſtion, they called for the determination of a council; and the aſſent, which they withheld from two of the apoſtles in their perſonal capaci-

[a] Ad judicandum quippe, non ad diſputandum, ſe conveniſſe aiebat ſynodus. —— Acta et ſcripta ſynodalia Dordracena. Præf. ad lectorem, p. 5.

[b] Letters, p. 60. [c] Confeſſ. p. 61. [d] Confeſſ. p. 62.

ties, they yielded to them when aſſembled in a body.[e] And unleſs you imagine that your bold aſſertions are ſufficient proofs, your own performance would be evidence againſt you, and prove that *all examination is* not *precluded* by eſtabliſhed confeſſions, though you, in defiance of facts, aſſert it is; nor are *the people conſtrained* by them *to acquieſce in a precarious ſyſtem.*

You affirm that *theſe formularies of doctrine, abounding in artificial and ſcholaſtick terms, are rather apt to perplex and confound things that are otherwiſe clear and plain, than to illuſtrate any thing with a ſuperior degree of perſpicuity.*[f] When hereticks have wreſted and tortured ſcripture expreſſions in ſupport of their own errors, and other falſe and groundleſs doctrines have been palliated and cloathed in ſcripture language, the ſenſe, which perſons in thoſe times and places fix on ſcripture phraſes relative to thoſe points, becomes uncertain, though the original ſenſe of ſuch phraſes be clear enough: and therefore it is neceſſary to find out terms which at preſent are of more preciſion, at leaſt in treating with theſe perſons.

You go on to ſay, that *opinions maintained by ſcripture authority, have been condemned as noxious errors; nay, noxious errors too have ſometimes procured themſelves to be eſtabliſhed by another party of confeſſioniſts and creed-makers: in which caſe theſe formularies, far from being of utility, ſerve only to deſtroy the force of each other.*[g] Now that councils have erred is moſt certain: that they have determined one contrary to another is alſo certain; and therefore we muſt make uſe of private judgement, as well as theirs, in the interpretation of ſcripture. But hath private judgement never erred? Has not one man's been contrary to another's?

[e] Acts xv. 31. [f] Confeſſ. p. 64. [g] Confeſſ. p. 65.

other's? Hath it not interpreted ſcripture in contradictory ſenſes? And muſt therefore ſcripture, publick confeſſions of faith, and reaſon itſelf, be all diſcharged together as blind guides? To this your reaſoning tends. And if ſo, we muſt have no religion at all, having no rule of religion. But, I beg you, let us rather call them all back again, each to his due place and rank, and make the beſt uſe of them that we can. The force of one formulary may be weakened, yet by no means deſtroyed by another: and even contrary confeſſions and creeds may be attended with circumſtances which will be of great and real utility to an unprejudiced enquirer, to judge on which ſide the truth lies.

But you procede to object, *If confeſſions are profitable* againſt *noxious errors*, they ſhould *be enlarged as often as new errors of that ſort ariſe.*[h] True. But many ſeemingly new errors are old ones condemned, if not explicitly, yet virtually, in the confeſſions already eſtabliſhed. And many really new ones are not very noxious, or not likely to ſpread conſiderably or long. Beſides, what *ſhould* be done in caſes of this nature, ſometimes, for various reaſons, *is not*, or *cannot* be done. And there are circumſtances in which attempting to do it would produce more harm than good. Further yet, in circumſtances which may appear to be more favorable, great caution and prudence are requiſite to avoid going too far: and on whatever account leſs is done than ſeems deſirable, this by no means proves, that what has been done formerly is uſeleſs.

You plead further, *The malignity of ſome heretics (and perhaps the very exiſtence of others) has been perpetuated by the reſpectable notice that ſome*

 church

[h] Ibid.

church or other has thought fit to take of them in an eſtabliſhed confeſſion.[i] Now God forbid that any ſhould incur ſuch guilt! But if they will, we cannot omit any part of our duty to prevent it. Serious perſons, who err, we pray God to enlighten and pardon, as we wiſh pardon for our own errors, and light by which to diſcern them: nor do we grudge to ſuch the indulgence of a peaceable diſſent: but that we ſhould neglect to inſtruct the people, who want inſtruction, by doctrines publickly approved, becauſe there are ſome men ſo malignant, that they will maintain heretical opinions *only* becauſe the church hath condemned them, (if indeed there be any ſuch,) is ſurely a very weak and unchriſtian expectation. With regard to the attempts of ſuch wretches, (as ſuch you ſuſpect there are, though I could ſcarcely believe it, and hope you feel no propenſity in your own breaſt that can make it credible to you,) *we pray that the word of God may have free courſe, and be glorified,* notwithſtanding ſuch endeavours; and that *we may be delivered from unreaſonable and wicked men.*[k]

You produce two inſtances in our own eſtabliſhment to ſupport your remark, that *thoſe hereſies, againſt which none of theſe proviſions have been made, are dead and ſunk into utter oblivion; and that thoſe had been perpetuated, of which notice had been taken in an eſtabliſhed confeſſion*; and theſe inſtances are, two of K. Edward's articles; his forty-ſecond, *cenſuring the reſtorers of Origen's opinion concerning the temporary duration of future puniſhments:* and his 40th, againſt thoſe who maintain that *the ſouls of men deceaſed do ſleep to the day of judgement.* Both which articles were *diſmiſſed*

[i] Confeſſ. p. 67.

[k] 2 Theſſ. iii. 1, 2.

diſmiſſed in 1562.[l] But did the maintainers of theſe errors, while they continued condemned, diſturb the church with greater malignancy than before? Nothing like a proof is attempted; but rather the contrary appears, that in ten years time there ſeemed no occaſion of providing any longer againſt them; to which the condemnation of them had probably contributed. On the other hand, when the proviſion againſt thoſe errors ceaſed, in order to ſupport your remark, we ſhould expect to be informed, that they *ſunk into utter oblivion.* No ſuch matter: Ruſt and Hartley (not to mention Tillotſon) wrote in defence of the firſt, *whoſe accurate diſquiſitions we ſhould probably have wanted,* you ſay, *had it ſtill been ſtigmatized with this heretical brand:* and as to the other, you tell us, *if an aſſent to the* 40*th article* (which condemned it) *had ſtill remained a part of our miniſterial ſubſcription, ſomething* which you call *very like a demonſtration, that our firſt reformers were miſtaken on this head, had probably never ſeen the light.*[m] I think, ſir, your own evidences prove directly againſt you: and inſtead of being ſomething *very like a demonſtration,* in ſupport of your remark, intirely overthrow it.

Another uſe of confeſſions, according to the Remonſtrants, *is, to obviate calumnies:* to prove their uſeleſneſs to this purpoſe, you inſtance in the caſe of the Remonſtrants themſelves, who *were charged with concealing ſome things of which they were aſhamed to give their judgement in publick. How,* ſay you, *do they obviate this calumny by their confeſſion? How does their publickly confeſſing ſome of their doctrines, prove that they concealed none? . . . They admit that they had purpoſely waved certain thorny and ſubtle queſtions, leaving them to the idle*

[l] Confeſſ. p. 66—68. [m] Confeſſ. p. 68.

and curious. Might not the doctrines relative to theſe queſtions be the very things they were aſhamed to confeſs? [n] The Remonſtrants were offended with *the horrid decrees*,[o] as the authors themſelves called them, of abſolute predeſtination and reprobation.[p] As this point was what occaſioned their oppoſition, they inſiſted on having that firſt diſcuſſed in the ſynod; which when done, they ſuppoſed conſent in the reſt would follow. Now if the Contra-remonſtrants charged them, on account of their declining to examine the other points previous to that of reprobation, that they concealed ſome things of which they were aſhamed to give their judgement in publick, their publick confeſſion on thoſe points was a vindication of themſelves, that they were not aſhamed to give their judgement in thoſe things which were before concealed. If they purpoſely waved thorny and ſubtle queſtions, and left them to the idle and curious, it was unreaſonable to charge them with concealing opinions which they thought needleſs and unneceſſary, and in examining of which they thought it time loſt to trouble themſelves or others.[q] Such might have calumniated the apoſtle himſelf for directing Timothy to *avoid fooliſh and unlearned queſtions, knowing that they do gender ſtrifes.*[r] And if they took occaſion, from the confeſſion of the Remonſtrants, to uſe them ill, they might have taken occaſion, from their declining the publication of any, to uſe them worſe. Or if ſome were more vehement againſt them after the publication than before

[n] Confeſſ. p. 69, 70.

[o] Epiſcopius's ſpeech in Hale's Letters, p. 39.

[p] Vide Scripta hiſtorica Remonſtr. p. 177.

[q] Supervacanea et ſuperflua procul habuimus, in non neceſſariis conſiſtere operæ pretium non judicavimus. Scripta hiſtorica, p. 195.

[r] 2 Tim. ii. 23.

before, muſt not ſome of better diſpoſitions have become leſs ſo? They were ſingularly unhappy indeed, if their juſt vindication of themſelves had no weight with any body. Should no perſons therefore ever explane themſelves, in order to their own defence? or was it imprudent only in the Remonſtrants?

There is but one way, you ſay, *of refuting theſe endleſs calumnies effectually; by confronting the accuſation with matter of fact.*[s] The accuſation is holding falſe doctrine. Why is not publiſhing a confeſſion of the doctrine which they do hold as much a matter of fact, and a more deciſive one, than any other?

You ſay, *The Calviniſts charge the Remonſtrants with cheriſhing the worſt meanings under ſcripture words. The Remonſtrants ſay it is a calumny, and appeal to their confeſſion. The ſame Remonſtrants bring the ſame accuſation againſt another ſort of men. May not they too ſay it is a calumny, and defend themſelves in a confeſſion? and at what does all this futile reaſoning aim, but at proving that whatever is once got into a confeſſion muſt be true.*[t] I anſwer, it aims at no ſuch thing; but only at clearing up what the real doctrine of each of the parties is. And it muſt be preſumed to be what in their confeſſions they declare it to be, unleſs the contrary can be ſhewn: whereas, till this declaration is made, either of them might, according to your own repreſentation of the caſe, *under ſcripture words cheriſh the worſt meanings.* I hope, ſir, this is no diſcovery of your and your friends reaſon for recommending confeſſions of faith in ſcripture words, that under cover of thoſe expreſſions very bad meanings may be conveyed.

You

[s] Confeſſ. p. 71. [t] Confeſſ. p. 72.

You think it juſt and reaſonable to give the Remonſtrants *their due praiſe, for their honeſt regard to the rights of private judgement: but by* their *limitations and conceſſions . . . they leave . . . no more virtue or efficacy to publick confeſſions than may be reaſonably claimed by, and aſcribed to, the writings and diſcourſes of any particular divine of judgement and learning.*[u] They meant to aſcribe to them more virtue and efficacy, as the judgement of *many*, equally capable and unprejudiced, is preferable to that of *one.*

But notwithſtanding all their honeſt regard to the rights of private judgement, they acknowledged the utility of publick confeſſions; an offence which you cannot pardon, and therefore cry out, *And yet who knows in what all this moderation and lenity would have ended, had the Remonſtrants been fortunate enough to have engaged the civil powers, and with them the majority, on their ſide?*[x] What would you think of my candor or juſtice, ſhould I ſuggeſt that, notwithſtanding your declamations againſt confeſſions, you have a formulary of your own *in petto*, which you would produce and eſtabliſh, if the higher powers were favorable to you? But I am willing to give credit to your open declarations againſt arbitrary impoſitions, as you muſt know your own heart, and I cannot. The like juſtice that I do you, you owe to the Remonſtrants; and I ſhould have expected it from you, as you profeſs to follow very ſtrictly the religion which the writings of the apoſtles teach, or which may be drawn from them by neceſſary conſequence.[y] St. Paul deſcribes the charity which he directs us to follow, that it *thinketh no evil,*

[u] Confeſſ. p. 73.
[x] Confeſſ. p. 73, 74.
[y] Confeſſ. note at p. 33.

evil, but hopeth all things.[z] But indeed you put in your claim to the privilege of drawing conſequences *for your own uſe*, and, I ſuppoſe, of interpreting by your own private judgement; according to which, were I to judge from your treatment of the poor Remonſtrants, I muſt preſume you would, like thoſe who explained *ſtatuimus* by *abrogamus*, interpret *follow after charity*, to mean, *ſhew none at all.*

On one occaſion, you take notice, *they have unwarily dropped this obſervation:* 'There are *ſome* 'things *of ſo great weight and moment, that they* 'cannot *be gainſayed without the extreme hazard of* 'our *ſalvation. Freely to contradict theſe, or quietly to ſuffer them to be contradicted by others, would* 'be *the fartheſt from prudence and charity poſſible.*' And you go on to aſk, *What may we ſuppoſe would the* gentle Epiſcopius *have done with the gainſayers of theſe things, inveſted, as he might poſſibly have been, with a commiſſion from the ſecular arm?*[a] I ſhould ſuppoſe, (and if your charity goes not ſo far, it is not *my* fault,) that the *gentle Epiſcopius*, and every Chriſtian paſtor whom I cannot charge with diſobeying the commands of his religion, would endeavour to *convert* ſuch *ſinner from the error of his ways*, in hopes of *ſaving a ſoul from death.*[b] If he continues obſtinately to maintain his hereſy, after repeted admonition, I ſhould ſuppoſe he would *reject him*,[c] or endeavour by Chriſtian methods to procure his rejection from the communion of the church. 'Yet, far from calling on the civil power for the temporal puniſhment of ſuch a one, every good paſtor and good Chriſtian would labor to preſerve him from it, as far as could poſſibly be done conſiſtently with the publick

[z] 1 Cor. xi. 7.
[a] Confeſſ. p. 74.
[b] James v. 20.
[c] Tit. iii. 10.

lick welfare; interceding for him with the magiſtrate, not hypocritically, as the church of Rome doth, but moſt ſincerely; and taking the utmoſt care, that if puniſhment muſt be inflicted, it might fully appear to be inflicted not on a religious, but civil account. But when this was done, if Epiſcopius was a miniſter of the ſtate, to whoſe office it belonged to execute the laws, gentle as his diſpoſition might be, by nature or grace, Epiſcopius, I preſume, muſt have obeyed his magiſtrate; unleſs, apprehending the puniſhment to be unjuſt, he rather choſe to reſign his office. But, ill-treated as you acknowledge the Remonſtrants were by the Belgic ſynod, they ſaw, not the lawfulneſs only, but the neceſſity of a confeſſion: for when a body of men are charged with holding falſe doctrine, how can they vindicate themſelves but by a publick declaration of what they do hold, and juſtifying thoſe doctrines by ſcripture; and of what they do *not* hold, by openly renouncing the imputed errors? But if their profeſſions of moderation are wreſted to ſuſpicions of a perſecuting ſpirit, and the confeſſion of ſome of their doctrines is made an argument of their concealment of them, confeſſions are uſeleſs things indeed; words have loſt their meaning, and it is the duty of judgement to procede *againſt* evidence. Your uncharitable ſurmiſe to the prejudice of the Remonſtrants, you are yourſelf ſenſible ſtands in need of an apology. You therefore add,

Let no man ſay, that, conſidering the temperate language of the Remonſtrants, a ſurmiſe of this kind cannot be juſtified. In this verbal deference for the authority of the ſcriptures, no church has ever gone further than our own, nor, conſequently, left greater latitude

latitude for private jugement.[a] Much is here wanting before it can have any appearance of an argument or juſtification of ſo uncharitable a ſurmiſe. Could you even prove (which you have not yet done, nor will be ever able to do) that the church of England, how mild ſoever ſhe ſpeaks in favor of private judgement, yet, being in power, oppreſſes all who differ in opinion from her; you cannot from thence juſtly infer, that the Remonſtrants, (though they ſpeak in the ſame manner,) would, if they had power, oppreſs thoſe who differ from them; unleſs by this medium, that *all*, who ſpeak in favor of private judgement, would, if they could get a majority, oppreſs thoſe who held any different opinions from their own. If you admit this medium, (and you can warrant your ſurmiſe by no other,) then let the church of England take heed: for what would the ungentle author of the Confeſſional do with her, ſhould he be fortunate enough to engage the civil powers, and with them the majority, on his ſide? However, ſir, at preſent, how willing ſoever you may be to condemn the church of England as an enemy to private judgement, you have gone no further in your proof of it, than that ſhe publickly profeſſes to aſſert the right of private judgement; laying down the ſcriptures as her rule of faith, 'by which all ec-'cleſiaſtical doctrines ought to be tried: no law, 'no tradition, no cuſtom, is to be received or 'continued if it be contrary to ſcripture.'[b] Other articles, which 'are not eſſentials of faith, 'ſhe propoſes only as a body of ſafe and pious 'principles, for the preſervation of peace, to be 'ſubſcribed and not openly contradicted by her 'ſons.'

[a] Confeſſ. p. 75. [b] Jewel's Apology.

'ſons.'[f] 'Only as a rule, according to which 'they ſhall either be admitted, or not admitted, 'to officiate as publick miniſters.'[g] And, in perfect agreement with her VIth article, you expreſs yourſelf in the words of M. Le Clerc. 'J'avouë que je ſuis de ceux qui ſont pour le 'Chriſtianiſme apoſtolique, ou pour celui qu'on 'peut tirer de leur écrits, en propres termes, ou 'par des conſequences neceſſaires, lorſqu'il s'agit 'd'un dogme eſſentiel.' To which you ſubſcribe in theſe words: *And ſo ſay I too; reſerving to myſelf, however, the privilege of drawing theſe neceſſary conſequences for my own uſe.*[h] The privilege you reſerve to yourſelf, I hope you will think reaſonable to allow to the church of England.

But it ſeems *theſe conceſſions of Bp. Bull and Dr. Stebbing are obſcure: . . . they are hardly ſenſe.*[i] In this caſe, as in many others before, we are to take your own aſſertions as ſufficient proofs; for you have not vouchſafed to ſhew either obſcurity or nonſenſe in them: and I cannot but commend your wiſdom in not attempting it. You call the making of ſuch conceſſions by the Remonſtrants, *oſcillating the queſtion backward and forward:* But perhaps you are here cenſuring what deſerves commendation. If they ſometimes recommend a deference to the determinations of learned men exerciſed in the ſcience which they profeſs to teach, and at other times inſiſt on the right of judging for ourſelves, in oppoſition to ever ſo great learning, and fixing at neither point, but changing from time to time between both; theſe movements are not to be called *oſcillations*, but occaſional approaches to the one or

[f] Bull's Vindicat. of the Church of England.
[g] Stebbing's Rational Enquiry.
[h] Conſeſſ. note at p. 33. [i] Conſeſſ. p. 77.

or the other, according to the attracting power which then ſurrounds it: and yet they may be as certain a meaſure of ſound judgement in ſuch queſtions, as the oſcillations of a pendulum are allowed to be of time. This method of appointing confeſſions and articles, and yet allowing them to be freely examined, avoids the extremes of unlimited implicit obedience and of no regard to ſuperiors, and vibrates regularly between authority and private judgement. I wiſh you would conſider a little what ſort of vibrations would follow from your method of obliging every teacher to nothing more than a profeſſion of belief in ſcripture, and a promiſe to inſtruct the people from that alone. Suppoſe he ſhould happen to think like the Quakers, that neither of the two ſacraments is preſcribed by it; or like the Baptiſts, that all Chriſtians are to be dipped, and none before years of diſcretion; what muſt his pariſhioners of another opinion do? If he may be turned out for acting upon theſe opinions, (which ſeems to be your notion, from what you quote with approbation about Burnet, at pages 79, 80.) would it not have been better to have known beforehand whether he held them? But if no one had a right to know them beforehand, how hath any one a right to puniſh him for them afterwards? If the people may leave him, and go to another miniſter, muſt he hold the living ſtill? or muſt there be no legal poſſeſſion of a living, but the people maintain their own miniſters during pleaſure? Many queſtions of a ſimilar nature might be aſked: and you ſhould let us have a complete view of your ſcheme, that ſeeing what you would ſubſtitute to govern our motions, in the room of this *oſcillation*, which you diſlike, we might judge of the practicableneſs of it.

You

You mention Dr. Stebbing's *Rational Enquiry* on this occaſion, and in other places in this chapter: but you paſs over ſuch things in it as thoroughly obviate or confute a great part of your arguments and cenſures; which you have produced again, juſt as if no notice had ever been taken of them. Is there not ſomething blameable in this conduct? If it procedes from impetuoſity, you ought to confeſs it with much concern, and moderate it. I will not aſcribe it to artful deſign; for ſuch art would be utterly inconſiſtent with all common fairneſs. You call him here *the rigidly eccleſiaſtical Dr. Stebbing.*[k] It would have been no improper inſtance of candor, if you had acknowledged that this rigid eccleſiaſtick ſaith, 'A fault there may be indeed in 'requiring men to ſubſcribe to more points than 'are neceſſary: which, I think, happens when 'they are required to ſubſcribe to thoſe points, 'about which (how true ſoever they may be in 'themſelves) Chriſtians may differ from one 'another, and yet all of them hold the common 'faith. And were the meaning of theſe late 'complaints only, that ſomething of this ſort 'might be rectified, it had been a matter per'haps not altogether unworthy the conſideration 'of our ſuperiors.'[l]

CHAP. IV.

But I procede to ſhew ſome more inſtances of your diſingenuity, and to weigh your objections to OUR articles; ſome of which, in your IVth chapter, riſe from *a particular examination of biſhop Burnet's introduction to the expoſition of the* XXXIX *articles of the church of England.*

In

[k] P. 76. [l] P. 55.

In your examination of this expoſition you obſerve, that his lordſhip *had not ſcrupled to declare, that the requiring ſubſcription to the thirty-nine articles is a great impoſition*, in his hiſtory of his own times, folio edition, vol. II. p. 634.[m] But did the biſhop mean, that no ſtandard of doctrine ſhould be eſtabliſhed? or that, if eſtabliſhed, the contradictors ought to paſs without puniſhment or cenſure? Far from it; for in that very paragraph he wiſhes the thirty-nine articles, 'with ſome corrections, to continue ſtill THE 'STANDARD OF DOCTRINE; and that thoſe who 'teach any contrary tenets ſhould be CENSURED.' He is indeed againſt ſubſcription, ~~be~~cauſe 'churches and ſocieties are much better ſecured 'by laws than by ſubſcriptions.' But why are not both better than one alone? and, of the two, why is not preventing falſe doctrine preferable to puniſhing it? Cenſure *only* would be very inſufficient. Thoſe who deſerved it would ſeldom be cenſured, and with great difficulty. Beſides, they would be at liberty to omit preaching whatever doctrine they pleaſed, and even to confine themſelves wholly to natural religion and morality; and thus deiſts might be preachers: whereas, ſuppoſing men honeſt, when they had declared themſelves in favor of Chriſtian doctrines, they would of courſe, as occaſions called for it, preach them all.

This opinion of biſhop Burnet, you ſay, was *not the reſult of a late experience; for many years before, through the biſhop's credit, and the weight of his character, the clergy at Geneva were releaſed from their ſubſcriptions to the* Conſenſus Doctrinæ, *and only left ſubject to puniſhment or cenſure, in caſe of writing or preaching againſt the eſtabliſhed doc-*

 trine.

[m] Confeſſ. p. 79. and note.

trine.[n] Biſhop Burnet was at Geneva before the revolution, and not afterwards; and from the date of Turretin's oration, mentioned by you at page 145, it is evident that ſubſcription to the *Formula Conſenſus* at Geneva was not aboliſhed till 1706; and therefore not by means of biſhop Burnet's influence twenty years before. And as the author of the biſhop's life, who was a very prejudiced perſon in theſe matters, miſtook in this particular, he might miſtake in the whole of what he ſaith of the biſhop's early diſlike to ſubſcriptions; and he might have no ſuch diſlike when he wrote his expoſition. But ſuppoſing that he had, why ſhould he not write a book to make men eaſy in ſubſcribing articles, all of which he declared himſelf to believe, even in his old age; and which he doth not appear to have thought could have been better expreſſed, excepting in the matter of original ſin and predeſtination; and which there was then no likelihood of getting changed, even in theſe two points? If his expoſition anſwered his purpoſe of making men eaſy, all was well. If it only made more eaſy than would have been elſe, it was better than if they had remained uneaſy. And whether fewer or more were uneaſy, the ſubſcription was like to continue. Or even had he a proſpect that the uneaſineſſes of any perſons, if he did nothing to remove them, might have procured ſubſcription to be laid aſide, yet ſtill he wiſhed the articles to continue as *a ſtandard of doctrine:* and on that account an expoſition of them was very proper.

You repreſent the biſhop as entering on this taſk [of expounding the articles] *with no little reluctance; for archbiſhop Tillotſon having firſt moved*

[n] Ibid.

ved him to this work, as he ſays in his preface, though elſewhere, (in his hiſtory of his own times, vol. II. page 228,) he ſays, 'the queen firſt moved him;' *he was determined in it only by the queen's command afterwards.* This you allow us to call a contradiction, if we pleaſe: but it is a contradiction, it ſeems, *in which the truth is clearly ſeen. That great prelate, unable to prevale with his friend Burnet, to undertake an affair of that nature at his own motion, applied to the queen, whoſe influence, added to his own, left the good biſhop no room to decline the ſervice, however diſagreeable it might be to him.*[o] Clear as the truth may appear to you in this contradiction, a different truth appears more clearly to me in it, which ſolves the difficulty; while you leave it, as you found it, a contradiction ſtill. I mean, that the queen firſt moved biſhop Burnet to explane thoſe articles which ſeemed to lean intirely to an abſolute predeſtination, in order to clear an objection that had been made, that our articles looked one way, and our doctors went another:[p] that then the archbiſhop moved him to go on with the reſt of the articles; which was his ground for ſaying, in his preface, 'I ſhould have 'kept within the ſame bounds (of modeſty and 'caution) if I had not been firſt moved to un-'dertake this work [the expoſition of all the ar-'ticles] by that great prelate who then ſat at the 'helm.' And when the ſame modeſty and caution made him decline it, the archbiſhop might overcome theſe by applying to the queen, that her majeſty, who firſt ſet him to work on *ſome* of the articles, would require him to go on with *the reſt*. Wherefore he ſays, 'And after that, de-'termined in it by a command that was ſacred to

[o] Confeſſ. p. 81. [p] See Confeſſ. p. 79.

'me by reſpect, as well as by duty.' So that all the biſhop's reluctance appears to be no other than that common modeſty and caution, not to venture on ſuch an undertaking 'without a com-'mand from thoſe who had authority to give it.' Pref. p. 1.

But *in this preface*, you ſay, *the biſhop takes particular care to apprize his readers, that his expoſition was not a work of authority.*[q] He means, that although he was authorized by the queen and the archbiſhop of Canterbury to give this expoſition, and that it was afterwards approved of by the two archbiſhops and ſome biſhops in their private capacities, yet the expoſition had not been authorized by the convocation and parliament, ſo as to be injoined to be publickly received. You and I may, either or both of us, reject it, if we ſee cauſe, without publick offence.

What is ſtill more, he there [in his preface] *freely declares the ſlender opinion he had of the effect of ſuch expedients as he had ſuggeſted in his introduction.* '*The ſettling on ſome equivocal formu-*'*laries* (ſays his lordſhip) *will never lay the con-*'*tention that has ariſen concerning the chief points* '*in difference between the Lutherans and the Cal-*'*viniſts.*'[r] You hope, I ſuppoſe, by repeting often, to make your reader believe you have proved that biſhop Burnet diſliked his own expoſition, and therefore both wrote and publiſhed it unwillingly: whereas there is not the leaſt appearance of any other unwillingneſs than what aroſe from diffidence of himſelf, and apprehenſion of ill treatment from others. Had he been unwilling on a different account, why ſhould he ever have publiſhed it, after the Queen and Tillotſon were dead? Your conjecture, that he did it becauſe now

[q] Confeſſ. p. 82. [r] Ibid.

now he could ſpeak his mind in a preface, is a very idle one; for the introduction was not *publiſhed* before the preface; he had no neceſſity therefore to contradict in the one what he ſaid in the other, ſince they both came out together. Had he thought any thing wrong had been ſuggeſted in the introduction, it had been more adviſeable to have ſuppreſſed the wrong ſuggeſtion by correcting the introduction, than to publiſh it and contradict it at the ſame time. I therefore do not ſuppoſe that he meant in his preface to declare any ſlender opinion he had of the expedients ſuggeſted in the introduction; but that what he ſays in both are conſiſtent with each other: for although he ſays, 'Equivocal formularies 'will never lay the contention that has ariſen be-'tween the Lutherans and Calviniſts,' Pref. p. vii. this does not contradict the Introduction, where he ſays, at page 8, 'Both ſides may ſubſcribe 'our articles with a good conſcience, *without any* '*equivocation*:' not by contentiouſly urging the article, each againſt the other, but by harmoniouſly meeting together in it. 'For though the 'firſt appearance ſeems to favour the doctrine of 'abſolute decrees, and the irreſiſtibility of grace, 'yet there are many expreſſions that have another 'face.'[a] If therefore each ſide would weigh the powerful ſcriptures which the other has to alledge, and neither would urge the conſequences of their opponents doctrine, (which conſequences their opponents do not aſſert;) but would conſider the conſequences of their own; both might prune ſomething from the extremes of their reſpective opinions, and the Lutherans might ſubſcribe to a ſcriptural predeſtination, and the Calviniſts to the conditionate decrees of the goſpel: both might

 embrace

[a] Introd. p. 8.

embrace *the unſpeakable comfort of God's election, ariſing to godly perſons who feel in themſelves the working of the ſpirit of Chriſt:* both might *receive God's promiſes in ſuch wiſe as they be generally ſet forth to us in holy ſcripture*; neither diſhonoring his *free grace in Chriſt*, by our pretended merits; nor fruſtrating *that will of his which we have expreſsly declared to us in the word of God*, by a ſecret one which is not reveled, and which therefore we do not and cannot know. The article appears not to have been drawn up to juſtify either the Lutheran or the Calviniſt, but to condemn the extreme opinions of both: not to comprehend both by the art of an *equivocal formulary*; but that both ſides, by uniting in the ſame truths, might ſubſcribe *with a good conſcience, and without any equivocation.* Thus preface and introduction agree; nor does the biſhop declare in the latter any contemptible opinion he himſelf had of his own expedients in the former.

You know not what archbiſhop Tillotſon's thoughts of ſubſcriptions were, but ſay, *Poſſibly he might think they were unwarrantable impoſitions, and wiſh at the bottom to be well rid of them.*[t] Yet your obligations to him had been but ſlender, if, as you charge him, he intended an equivalent, that ſhould *bow our necks to the yoke with a witneſs.* However, in this you miſrepreſent him, by ridiculouſly miſtaking his words. The propoſal you quote from him is, 'We do ſubmit to 'the doctrine, diſcipline, and worſhip of the 'church of England, as it SHALL BE eſtabliſhed 'by law, and promiſe to teach and practice ac-'cordingly.' The archbiſhop's title to his paper is, 'Conceſſions, which WILL probably be 'made' by the church of England. Theſe conceſſions

[t] Conſeſſ. p. 83, and note.

ceſſions were to be eſtabliſhed by a future law: miniſters were to promiſe to ſubmit to the doctrine, diſcipline, and worſhip of the church, as it ſhould be eſtabliſhed by that law. The law being not yet made, he uſes the expreſſion, *as it ſhall be eſtabliſhed:* but had the law been once made, evidently the promiſe muſt have run, *as it is by law eſtabliſhed.* Little inaccuracies of expreſſion in a ſhort-hand draught may eaſily happen: ſo that interpreting, *as it ſhall be eſtabliſhed,* to mean, *as it ſhall be at any time hereafter eſtabliſhed,* inſtead of, *as it ſhall* THEN *be eſtabliſhed,* ſhews you are are incapable of candor, even towards the mild Tillotſon.

With reſpect to the ſenſe in which the articles are to be ſubſcribed,[a] the compilers of them, and the church, and the ſtate, might intend ſubſcription to be an expreſſion of belief in them, and yet intend no other rule of underſtanding them to be followed, than that of their grammatical ſenſe. The ſenſe of the compilers, or the majority of them, might not be known eaſily by every one, even at firſt, otherwiſe than by a preſumption that the grammatical ſenſe was theirs: much leſs could it be known eaſily long after. Their opinion might be known on ſeveral points, without knowing how much of that opinion they intended to expreſs in the articles, otherwiſe than by the words of them: for perſons may believe more than they judge *neceſſary* to be believed. It is to be preſumed that they intended their words to have but one grammatical ſenſe: and that ſenſe may be but one, and perſons may agree in it; and yet, going beyond it almoſt imperceptibly, may differ and diſpute about ſeveral things relative to the ſame point, and in their warmth

[a] See Confeſſ. p. 85.

may charge one another with differing from the article. But, *undeſignedly*, the compilers might uſe words which had two grammatical ſenſes: and ſometimes the ſubſcriber may think them both true: in which caſe it is much the ſame as if they had but one. Or if he thinks only one true, that alone will be ſome preſumption that the compilers meant it; and he cannot often, if ever, be ſure that they did not. So that ſubſcription, in the grammatical ſenſe, and in the ſenſe of the compilers, may differ very little, or not at all. Perſons muſt be allowed to ſubſcribe in different ſenſes, if the one true ſenſe be not certain. You ſay they muſt ſubſcribe in the ſenſe in which the firſt ſubſcribers did.[w] If by the firſt ſubſcribers you mean the compilers, that point hath been juſt now conſidered. If you mean the firſt after ſubſcription was injoined by law, we neither know them nor their ſenſe, nor are bound by it.

You think *all the biſhop's pains in expounding the articles were abſolutely thrown away*, becauſe he complains that *the greater part of the clergy ſubſcribe the articles without ever examining them.*[x] Probably thoſe clergymen, were they to ſubſcribe only the ſcripture, would do it in the ſame manner. And if ſome do it, though they can hardly ſatisfy their conſciences about ſome things in them, the fault is their own; and they will ordinarily be more ſhy of contradicting them than if they had not ſubſcribed them. But neither of theſe things proves, that *all the biſhop's pains in expounding them were abſolutely thrown away*: for ſtill his expoſition may have been uſeful to very many, and may be hereafter to more: beſides that what is fitted to be uſeful, is commendable, whether it proves to be ſo or not. And evidently much

[w] See Confeſſ. p. 86. [x] Confeſſ. p. 87.

much leſs doth either of theſe things prove that ſubſcription is an unwarrantable impoſition.

You blame the *trimming* meaſures, as you call them, *of Tillotſon and Burnet in matters of religion*, and aſk, *When were they ever known to ſuccede? and where were they ever known to conciliate the mind of any one of thoſe unreaſonable zealots, to whoſe humor they were accommodated?* [y] I doubt not but the minds of thouſands of zealots have been conciliated by the means of Tillotſon and Burnet. And it is evident to every one, except men deeply prejudiced, that the temper of the clergy of this generation is unſpeakably milder than of thoſe of the laſt. What would you wiſh thoſe two prelates had done? You are diſpleaſed at what they did: yet you acknowledge, in the next page, that doing more was impracticable, and ſome thought attempting it might have endangered the government. And very likely it would, as the friends of the late king were waiting to have this handle given them; and the aboliſhing epiſcopacy in Scotland by K. William, in favor of preſbytery, would have made the endeavours of thoſe prelates, of reforming the church, if imprudently perſiſted in, liable to miſinterpretation, as if their ſcheme was to undermine the church of England, and by degrees let in the preſbytery. That thoſe biſhops could not have been more oppoſed while they lived, or vilified ſince they died, if they had vigorouſly promoted, at all adventures, what you call a reformation, is notoriouſly falſe. They would have been much more oppoſed while they lived; and they are now, and have long been, generally eſteemed: your being able to produce only too poor inſtances to the contrary is a ſtrong proof of it. But what would

[y] Confeſſ. p. 87,

would wiſe and good men have ſaid of them, if by attempting at all hazards, what *they had ſenſe enough to perceive was impracticable*, they had brought back ſlavery and popery?

Here you honor biſhop Burnet with a new note, added in your ſecond edition, in which you call him *a truly wiſe and good prelate*, after you had been deſcribing him as juſtifying ſubſcription againſt his own convictions, and deſerting the reformation, *which he was conſcious was very much wanted*, out of a *trimming complaiſance to the times*. Had this been intended, in your ſecond edition, as a kind of recantation of the injury you had done him in the firſt, I ſhould have applauded the ingenuouſneſs of it: but in that caſe you would have ſoftened your text, as well as added your note. And the note itſelf will open your deſign in writing it; not to do juſtice to biſhop Burnet, but to renew your injuries againſt archbiſhop Wake, which neither truth, time, nor the friendly admonition of the *learned and worthy perſon* you mention in your preface, have been able to conquer. To this end you inform us, that biſhop Burnet hoped King George I. would *complete the reformation, and eſtabliſh a confidence and correſpondence with the* PROTESTANT *and* REFORMED *churches abroad.* One reaſon of the diſappointment of theſe hopes you give, is, that, ſoon after, *Dr. William Wake was promoted to the ſee of Canterbury*; *and* HE *rather choſe to eſtabliſh a confidence and correſpondence with the* POPISH GALLICAN *church, than with the* PROTESTANT REFORMED *churches, either at home or abroad.*[z] At the very time that he endeavoured to perſuade the *popiſh Gallican church* to break with the biſhop of Rome, and unite with us againſt popery, (which ſurely

[z] Confeſſ. note at p. 88.

ſurely was no crime in a proteſtant archbiſhop,) there was an eſtabliſhed confidence and correſpondence between him and the reformed churches abroad, as appears by his letters to Le Clerc and Jablonſki. To the former, (in a letter dated April 1716,) he expreſſes very warmly his affections for them, his abhorrence of the thought of conſidering them as no churches, and his deſire of their union with the church of England; which he ſays he would purchaſe at any rate. . . That he muſt be blind who ſees not how much this would conduce to the ſecurity of our religion, and even to the converſion of the falſely called Catholicks of the Roman church. And at the concluſion of this topick he breaks off in this manner: 'But this, to me, ever delightful 'ſubject, of union of the reformed churches a-'mong themſelves, carries me further than it 'ought.'[a] His letter to the other is dated May 1719. Jablonſki had conſulted him about treating with the Papiſts for an union with them; which he diſſuades, as they will never yield it but on terms of ſubmiſſion to their tyranny; and ſays he, 'God baniſh far from our minds ſo de-'ſtructive and ſo ſcandalous a wickedneſs!'[b] If you

[a] Unionem arctiorem inter omnes Reformatos procurare quovis pretio vellem . . . quantum hoc ad religionis noſtræ ſecuritatem conduceret; quantum etiam ad pſeudo-catholicorum Romanenſium converſionem, cæcus ſit qui non videat . . . ſed abripuit me longiùs quam par eſſet, hæc ſemper mihi dulcis de pace ac unione eccleſiarum reformatarum cogitatio.

[b] Hoc tam pernicioſum, tam infame facinus, ab animis omnium noſtrorum longè avertat Deus! The ſame Jablonſki informs us, as a certain fact, that, from the beginning of the reformation, the church of England had always held a brotherly correſpondence with the foreign Proteſtants. That it was not more effectual, he lays the fault, not

you have any ſpark of ingenuouſneſs and candor, or love of truth and juſtice, in your nature, you muſt bluſh for your treatment of archbiſhop Wake: and the reader muſt be convinced that no love of truth or reformation, but an implacable hatred and malice, has guided your pen in this performance. Miſtake calls for charity; malice for abhorrence.

And now begins your examination of the biſhop's expoſition; in the introduction to which you tell us, that his lordſhip *rather endeavours to palliate and excuſe, than to deny or confute, the impropriety which had been objected to our church, for making ſuch a collection of tracts the ſtandard of her doctrine.*[c] With what truth this is ſaid, be the reader judge. With regard to the enlargements of the creed before the reformation, the biſhop ſays, (Introd. p. 3.) 'This was *abſolutely neceſſary* 'as to ſome points:' and he inſtances in the point of the Divinity of our Saviour, that Chriſtians might not ſeem to worſhip a creature. He adds,

p. 4,

not on Dr. Wake, or any Engliſh biſhops, but on the Engliſh Preſbyterians; who, to ſtrengthen their own faction, endeavoured to ſlacken this cord of amity, by repreſenting the *Reformed* in Pruſſia as holding tenets in oppoſition to the doctrines of this church. Il eſt certain, que depuis le commencement de la reformation, l'egliſe Anglicane a toujours entretenu une correſpondence fraternelle avec les egliſes de deçà la mer, comme l'a fait voir entre autres M. de la Mothe, miniſtre de l'egliſe Françoiſe de la Savoie, dans les deux ſavans traités qu'il a publiés en 1705, et en 1707. —— Les Preſbyteriens d'Angleterre ont fait leurs efforts pour relâcher ce lien, dans la vue de fortifier leur parti, en repandant que nous étions de leur ſentiment par oppoſition à l'egliſe Anglicane.

Relation des meſures qui furent priſes dans les années 1711, 12, 13, pour introduire la liturgie Anglicane dans le royaume de Pruſſe et dans l'électorate de Hanover, 1767. N°. xii. p. 73.

[c] Confeſſ. p. 90.

p. 4, that at the reformation, 'particular cir-'cumſtances made it ſeem to be *more neceſſary.*' And he concludes, p. 5, 'This may ſerve in 'general to *juſtify* the largeneſs and particularities 'of the confeſſion of our faith.'

The biſhop ſays, there was a form, ſtandard, or fixed formulary, ſettled very early in moſt churches, to which he refers, under a variety of expreſſions taken from St. Paul. To which you object, that *a fixed formulary* is not likely to be meant by ſuch *a variety of expreſſions. A fixed formulary, one would think, ſhould have a fixed title.*[a] Do you mean this as a *proof*, or even a *preſumption?* Is not that fixt formulary, the *apoſtles creed*, intitled by a great variety of expreſſion, *creed, articles of belief, confeſſion, ſymbol, rule of faith?* Nay, ſir, by this argument I may *prove*, at leaſt *preſume*, that you have not written your book againſt ſubſcribing to our XXXIX articles of religion, becauſe you call that collection by a variety of expreſſions, *a creed, confeſſion, articles, human expoſition, a ſyſtem, peremptory deciſions, a bridle upon the tongue, a ſhackle upon the pen-hand, an office of inſurance.* Now, ſir, is it, or *is it not probable that the ſame form of words ſhould be deſcribed in terms which may denote a hundred different forms?*

To enter into a juſt criticiſm on theſe expreſſions [of St. Paul,] you ſay, *would be tedious and unneceſſary.*[b] I ſhould think it more unneceſſary to enter into one that is *not* juſt. And if both are unneceſſary, why do you enter into any? But you conceive you ſhall have an advantage by your criticiſm on ſome of theſe expreſſions, and you are unwilling to part with it; therefore you proceede.

Suffice

[a] Confeſſ. p. 91. [b] Confeſſ. p. 92.

Suffice it to obſerve, after very competent judges, that τύπος διδαχῆς, *and* ὑποτύπωσις ὑγιαινόντων λόγων, *appear to refer rather to the exemplification of the Chriſtian doctrine in the practice of pious believers, than to any form of words . . . Without giving this ſenſe to the words,* τύπῳ διδαχῆς, *Rom.* vi. 17. *it is abſolutely unintelligible. And whatever is the ſignification of* τύπος *here, muſt be the meaning of* ὑποτύπωσις, 2 *Tim.* i. 13.[t]

The words are, ὑπηκούσατε δὲ ἐκ καρδίας εἰς ὃν παρεδόθητε τύπον διδαχῆς, *You have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were committed:* That is, that they had yielded themſelves willingly, like ductile matter into the artificer's hands, to be formed or faſhioned according to the model to which they had been delivered. This model was not the whole New Teſtament; for that was not yet written: and it muſt, in the very nature of things, be ſuppoſed, that the firſt preachers of the goſpel furniſhed their hearers and converts with brief ſketches and outlines of their doctrine, to be afterwards gradually filled np. But you think the words of St. Paul abſolutely unintelligible, except they bear this ſenſe: *Ye have from your heart obeyed that practical exemplification of doctrine which was delivered you.* Surely it would be RATHER more intelligible to underſtand it of a preſcript or rule of doctrine, as Œcumenius does, ὅτιον ὅρον καὶ κανόνα. *You have obeyed that rule of doctrine.*

But you continue to object, *The doctrine is* ONE *thing, and the type of the doctrine* ANOTHER. *The doctrine is, and muſt be, expreſſed by, and conſequently in, ſome form of words. But the* TYPE *of that form muſt be ſomething different from the* FORM *itſelf.*[u] You ſeem to forget that the Greek word τύπος,

[t] Ibid. [u] Ibid.

τύπος, or type, is rendered in the Engliſh by the word *form*; theſe words therefore ſtanding for the ſame thing, your ſhrewd obſervation may be thus expreſſed: 'The doctrine is *one* thing, and the 'type of the doctrine *another*. The doctrine is, 'and muſt be, expreſſed by, and conſequently 'in, ſome type of words: but the type of that 'type (of which the text ſpeaks nothing) muſt 'be ſomething different from the type itſelf.' Really, ſir, you have here won me over to your opinion, juſt before intimated, that your criticiſm would be ſomething tedious. That the doctrine is *one* thing, and the type of that doctrine *another*, we admit. The doctrine at large, and ſome of it repetedly delivered, is contained in the goſpel: the type of that doctrine may be either (according to one ſenſe of the word) a ſummary or abridgement of it; whether ſuch as the evangeliſts and apoſtles taught as the rudiments of Chriſtian faith, and afterwards filled up with hiſtorical or occaſional incidents in the goſpels and epiſtles, or ſuch as the ſucceding fathers of the church collected from them: or (according to another ſenſe of the word) the practical exemplification of that doctrine; becauſe the doctrine may be deſcribed either in a ſummary, or in our lives. Such ſummary, or ſuch lives, are equally types of the doctrine; which word may be applied to either, and the context muſt determine which is meant.

Unwilling to admit that it ever ſignifies a ſummary or abridgement, you refer us in the note to *Grotius and Bengelius's Gnomon upon the place*, Rom. vi. 17. τύπος, *typus, veſtigium, figura, exemplar, forma*, Hen. Stephens. Acts xxiii. 25. τύπος *is the literal copy of Lyſias's epiſtle to Felix; not the ſum or abridgement of it*. I happen to have

both

both the books by me. Grotius ſays, 'You have 'obeyed according to the manner (or pattern) 'which the doctrine of the goſpel preſcribes:' referring to Hebr. viii. 5. from Exod. xxv. 40. for the meaning of the word τύποι: where *the heavenly things* anſwers to *the doctrine of the goſpel*: the *pattern*, example, and ſhadow of thoſe heavenly things to the *manner* or pattern of the goſpel doctrine; and the *obedience* to be formed by it, to the *tabernacle* which Moſes was to build according to that pattern. Bengelius refers to the ſame pattern in the mount. If you mean by quoting H. Stephens, that, among the ſeveral interpretations of τύπος, it never ſignifies, *a ſum* or *abridgement* of any thing, you might find, and probably did find, (only it did not ſerve your turn to ſay it,) in that very ſame lexicon, that it does ſometimes ſignify ſo: τύπῳ τ' ἀληθὲς ἐκδείκνυσθαι, Ariſt. Ethic. 1. cap. 3. ὡς ἐν τύπῳ καὶ ἁπλῶς εἰπεῖν, Theoph. hiſt. pl. lib. 4. τύπῳ καὶ ἐπὶ κεφαλαίῳ λέγομεν, Ariſtot. 11. cap. 7. *we repreſent ſummarily*. Therefore, though τύπος doth ſignify, in general, a repreſentation, yet it ſignifies alſo more particularly, a brief, conciſe repreſentation or deſcription. And ὑποτύπωσις ſignifies this yet more commonly, as Stephens alſo ſhews, and the learned and famous Fabricius more largely and fully, in his firſt note on the Hypotypoſes of Sextus Empiricus. And the verb ὑποτυπόω hath the ſame ſenſe.

You proceed in your criticiſm, and tell us, *the literal Engliſh of* ὑγιαίνοσης λόγοι *is, healing or ſalutary words*.[h] If this were true, it would ſignify little to the preſent diſpute. But it is utterly falſe: ὑγιαίνω never ſignifies, to heal or be ſalutary: it ſignifies, to be in good health, either in body or mind; as ὑγιὴς ſignifies, healthy, in either reſpect.

[h] Confeſſ. p. 93.

ſpect. Ὑγιαίνω is uſed by St. Paul over and over, concerning ſound belief, in oppoſition to falſhoods and fables; particularly Tit. i. 13. ii. 2. Heathen authors ſpeak the ſame language: in Lucian, περὶ ἀσχολ. we find ὑγιὴς is joined with ἀληθὴς. And in Plutarch, *de audiend. poet.* if you can bear an expreſſion ſo near akin to orthodoxy, δόξαι περὶ θεῶν ὑγιαίνουσαι καὶ ἀληθεῖς.

You ſay, *fixt formularies would not have been enlarged in any future time.*[i] Could not the words be altered or explained? What then would become of all the tranſlations of the Bible? But forms may be fixed, as moſt ſuitable to this time or place, yet others, different in expreſſion, tho' not in ſubſtance, may be more ſuitable to other places at the ſame time. And they may, in the ſame place, at different times, be variable, by way of explanation, in oppoſition to new errors.

If any other ſtandard is meant [than the ſcriptures] *where is it to be found?* . . . If their ſucceſſors, according to biſhop Burnet, '*received* '*theſe ſhort abſtracts from the apoſtles themſelves,* '*with ſome variations,*' you think, *the moment you admit of variations.* . . . *even the uſe of any formulary, as a ſtandard or teſt of all doctrines, immediately vaniſhes away. There muſt be left, in ſuch varying formularies, room for doubtful and precarious judgements: and the ſcriptures alone, in all ſuch caſes, muſt be the dernier reſort. And if ſo, why might they not as well have been admitted to decide in the firſt inſtance?* [k] A ſtandard is meant, other than the goſpels and epiſtles, as committed to writing, which is to be found, as to the *ſubſtance* of it, in thoſe books; for the writers of them delivered the ſame doctrine for *ſubſtance*,

[i] Ibid. [k] Confeſſ. p. 94.

with ſome variety as to the *form and expreſſion*; as appears from the ſame facts related in different modes by the evangeliſts, and the ſame doctrines taught in different modes in the epiſtles. But, notwithſtanding this variety, the goſpels and epiſtles are the teſt of all doctrines. But before any of theſe were written, there was a *form of doctrine, wholeſome and ſound words*, which were delivered by the apoſtles to their converts and diſciples. Before any goſpel was committed to writing, or when no more than *one* epiſtle had been ſent, St. Paul exhorts the Theſſalonians to *hold the traditions which had been taught.*[1] Theſe traditions were to the Theſſalonians their ſtandard of doctrine; whether delivered to them by the verbal inſtructions of Paul, Silas, and Timothy, or by their former epiſtle, which, ſome ſuppoſe, was the firſt piece of the New Teſtament that was written. *Whether by word or our epiſtle.* According to theſe traditions in the ſeveral churches were the hiſtories of the goſpels and the letters of the apoſtles framed. The neceſſary points of doctrine were mentioned in theſe, as the occaſion required, and confirmed by hiſtorical facts or perſuaſions, as they, for whoſe uſe they were written, made it neceſſary. The τὰ πεπληροφορημένα, or *things moſt ſurely believed*, were the ſame: the διήγησις, or *order of ſetting them forth*,[m] was left to the genius and ſtyle of the writer, and the particular occaſions of thoſe they wrote to; and theſe therefore *varied*. Now, though we believe, that all neceſſary points of doctrine, which the TRADITIONS contained, are preſerved in theſe ſacred writings; yet many facts and circumſtances are inſerted, which, though true, are not ſo eſſential and important, as that every one muſt know and believe

[1] 2 Theſſ. xi. 15. [m] Luke i. 1.

lieve them. Thoſe eſſential and important points might be, and we know were, afterwards collected in creeds, the ſame for ſubſtance, though various in form. And as the epiſtles were written to anſwer the neceſſities of the churches to whom they were addreſſed, and the goſpels were written for the reſpective information of Jews, Gentiles, Romans, and to confute the errors of Ebion and Cerinthus; ſo the creeds were variouſly formed for the circumſtances of *times* and *places*, and as new hereſies aroſe, explanations were inſerted to refute thoſe hereſies by the authority of ſcripture. Amongſt the apoſtolick teachers varying formularies would give no room for doubtful judgements. And afterwards, variation of phraſe might make none of ſenſe; or what was added might be evidently right in itſelf, and ſeaſonable in reſpect of circumſtances, expreſſing what was all along underſtood, but needed not till then be explicitly ſet forth. If any thing was doubted indeed, ſcripture muſt be the dernier reſort: but it might be uſeful to propoſe it in a confeſſion of faith, in order to have it examined by ſcripture. And further, what it might not be proper to put into a creed, it may be very proper to put into articles, by which clergymen are directed how to inſtruct others.

Upon his lordſhip's ſuppoſition, that the apoſtles, or their companions, delivered theſe formularies of faith as depoſits, with ſuch variations as the caſes and ſituations of particular churches demanded, it is next to impoſſible they ſhould all have periſhed ſo abſolutely, that no remains of them are to be diſcovered to this hour.[n] Such variations, as the caſes of churches required, would of courſe be made after the time of the apoſtles, as well as in it, in

 their

[n] Confeſſ. p. 95.

their *depoſits*. Of theſe *depoſits*, ſo varied, we have the remains in the ſeveral creeds extant in the antient writers. But do you think there was no baptiſmal creed originally? or if there was one, was it invariable, or variable, in expreſſions? If the former, your own queſtions return upon you, What is become of it? If the latter, that is juſt what we ſay.

We are told, you ſay, *that theſe formularies contained a* κρύφιον δόγμα, *a ſecret doctrine, ſeldom, if ever, committed to writing.*[o] A *ſecret doctrine*, which is not reveled in the ſcriptures, is what I know nothing of: doctrines which contain MORE than *the whole counſel of God*, I have nothing to ſay to: and additions, which, tho' an angel from heaven was to preach, I am forbid to receive: ſuch I reject: but that part of the goſpel revelation was, and may be, *relatively hidden*, is certain. Our Saviour told his diſciples, before his aſcenſion, *I have yet many things to ſay unto you, but you cannot bear them* NOW.[p] And the author of the epiſtle to the Hebrews diſtinguiſhes *the firſt principles of the oracles of God*, and *laying the foundations*, which he compares to *milk for babes*, and *the unſkilful in the word of righteouſneſs*, from that *perfection*, which he compares to *ſtrong meat belonging to them of full age.*[q] After they were ſufficiently inſtructed in the firſt principles, *repentance, faith, remiſſion of ſins, the reſurrection*, and *eternal judgement*, then a part of what was yet a κρύφιον δόγμα was reveled to them by baptiſm, *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt:* and afterwards, according to their proficiency, ſuch other parts of it as the teachers thought neceſſary, till they had *declared* to

[o] Confeſſ. p. 96. [p] John xvi. 12.
[q] Heb. v. 12, 13, 14. vi. 1.

to them *the whole counſel of God.* In this light the κρύφιον δόγμα will be no other than the revelation of the goſpel delivered to us in the ſcriptures of the New Teſtament. Theſe are indeed, as they ought to be, communicated to us, every part of them without exception. But a ſkilful teacher, in explaning them, will obſerve that the whole doctrine contained in them is too much to be communicated at once, and much of it improper for ignorant diſciples, before the firſt principles and foundations are laid, and muſt therefore be opened to them by degrees, with diſcretion. The leſſon at baptiſm being nearly the ſame, though not always perhaps exactly ſo, the ſubſtance of it, we may ſuppoſe, is come down to us in thoſe ſhort confeſſions of faith, which at length came to be called Creeds or Symbols. But thoſe who were to be inſtructors, when commiſſioned to their office, might be expected to be exerciſed in leſſons of further perfection, that they might be able to teach others.

A caſuiſtical divine, you inform us, *is a dealer in cryptics.*[r] There is indeed a caſuiſtical profeſſorſhip at Cambridge: but what are the *cryptics* in which a caſuiſtical divine, by his profeſſorſhip, is a dealer? If perſons put caſes to him as their own, he is not to revele, (nor is any divine, nor any layman,) what may hurt them: but he profeſſes no fund of ſecret principles for the reſolution of queſtions. And whatever your degree of charity may allow you to ſuſpect, that *few people carry their ſcruples to caſuiſts, but when they ſuſpect the goſpel is againſt them*, and hope *to be obliged by their caſuiſts with drugs fetched from the hidden wiſdom of fathers and ſchoolmen*; yet others know that many come to have caſes ſolved

 with

[r] Confeſſ. p. 98. note.

with very upright, and even ſcrupulous, diſpoſitions, expecting the genuine medicines of the goſpel, and not the drugs of ſchoolmen.

We expect a good account, by what authority theſe large additions were made, which appear in creeds and confeſſions of a later date.' You have a good account of them in biſhop Burnet's Introduction, page 3, where he tells us the enlargements of creeds were at firſt occaſioned by the prevarications of hereticks.

But it ſeems *it is not clear, (to you at leaſt,) that biſhop Burnet thought even the imputation of idolatry, occaſioned by the worſhip of the Son, a ſufficient reaſon for adding the words*, of the ſame ſubſtance with the Father, *to the creeds of the Chriſtian church.*' Pleaſe to look over the third page of his Introduction again. Are not theſe words there? 'To uſe more expreſs words . . . was *abſolutely neceſſary* in ſome points; for they being obliged 'to ſhew, that the Chriſtian religion did not 'bring in that idolatry which it condemned in 'heathens, it was alſo *neceſſary* to ſtate this mat-'ter ſo, that it ſhould appear that they worſhip-'ped *no creature*, but that the perſon to whom all 'agreed to pay divine adoration was *truly God*: 'and it being found that an equivocation was 'uſed in all other words except that of the *ſame 'ſubſtance*, they judged it *neceſſary* to fix on it. '. . . At all times it is *very neceſſary* to free the 'Chriſtian religion from this imputation of ido-'latry; but this was never *ſo neceſſary*, as when 'Chriſtianity was engaged in ſuch a ſtruggle with 'paganiſm. . . . There was therefore *juſt rea-'ſon* given to ſecure this main point.' Now, ſir, if it is not clear to you that *the honeſt heart and diſcerning head of Dr. Burnet* thought there was ſufficient

[s] Confeſſ. p. 100. [t] Ibid.

ſufficient reaſon for adding theſe words, what muſt we think of your *diſcerning head*, to which it is not clear; or of your *honeſt heart*, in ſaying ſo if it is clear?

You next examine *the two particular circumſtances* at the time of the reformation, to which the biſhop ſays, *it became neceſſary our reformers ſhould pay a particular regard.* The firſt was, 'That when the ſcriptures were firſt put into 'mens hands at the reformation, as a rule of 'faith, many ſtrange conceits were pretended to 'be derived from them, which gave riſe to ſe-'veral impious and extravagant ſects. Whence 'the papiſts took occaſion to calumniate the re-'formation, as if theſe ſectaries ſpoke out what 'all proteſtants thought.' To which you reply, *The Reformers ſhould have done as the apoſtles did in the ſame ſituation. The apoſtles were ſlandered as having taught that men* might do evil, that good might come. *The doctrine of free grace was the immediate occaſion of this calumny. . . . . What courſe did the apoſtles take in this exigency?* Did they frame a new *creed or confeſſion?* —— *No; they left the calumny to be confronted by the goſpel hiſtory, and the tenor of their own writings and converſation, and gave themſelves no further trouble about it.*[a] One would think it became the Engliſh reformers to wipe off the aſperſion undeſervedly caſt upon them, as if they ſo aſſerted free grace as to diſcharge themſelves of all reſtraints. *But the apoſtles were ſo traduced: did they form a new creed or confeſſion?* If you mean ſynodically, I know but of one council, in which they publiſhed any general decree: but the publick epiſtles of them ſeverally to the churches are ſuperior in authority to all the ſynodica decrees

[a] Confeſſ. p. 102.

of their ſucceſſors. And St. Paul thought it incumbent on him to deny the charge, and to condemn the ſlanderers who urged it. *As we be ſlanderouſly reported, and as ſome affirm that we ſay, Let us do evil, that good may come, whoſe damnation is juſt.*[w] And he added this condemnation of them to thoſe ſcriptures which are, or ought to be, the foundation of all creeds and confeſſions, how new ſoever their forms may be: and he proved the juſtneſs of that condemnation, by appealing to their creed at baptiſm: *Shall we continue in ſin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How ſhall we, that are dead to ſin,* (as they had been taught to believe in baptiſm they were,) *live any longer therein?*[x] So much trouble he gave himſelf about it; and no more than what was equivalent to this did the reformers.

Had the reformers (as you are pleaſed to direct) *held up the Bible, and ſaid, Here is our rule of faith and manners, and by this only we deſire to have our doctrine and practice examined; and had they, as the apoſtles did, acted in conformity to that declaration, they muſt for ever have ſilenced every cavil and every ſlander.*[y] You forget, ſir, that *holding up the Bible* was the occaſion of theſe ſtrange conceits, which were pretended by the ſeveral impious and extravagant ſects to be derived from it. I will mention two or three, for the honor of private interpretation. *I will pray with the ſpirit.*[z] Hence they warranted their extempore profuſions, and denied the lawfulneſs of pre-compoſed forms of prayer; and with ſome prudence at the time when the objection was firſt made, becauſe there was then ſcarce one of the brethren who had learned

[w] Rom. iii. 8.
[x] Rom. vi. 1, 2.
[y] Conſeſſ. p. 104.
[z] 1 Cor. xiv. 15.

learned to read. Others held up their Engliſh Bibles, and proved againſt infant-baptiſm [a] from this ſcripture, *Except* A MAN *be born of water*;[b] therefore baptiſm was not intended for infants or children. Another kept up his excrements for a week, then caſt them out into the ſtreet, and rolled himſelf in them, becauſe, *except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye ſhall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*[c] *They had all things common:* from hence the German enthuſiaſts inferred the community of goods and women. And others inferred that whores are in a more ſalvable ſtate than honeſt matrons, becauſe *publicans and harlots ſhall enter into heaven before the Phariſees.* Holding theſe and ſuch like extravagant conceits was the crime with which the Proteſtants, in general, were charged, in conſequence of their claim to interpret ſcripture by their private judgement: how then would they be exculpated by only *holding up the Bible?* Acting in conformity to the Bible, when rightly interpreted, (and otherwiſe it leads to the utmoſt confuſion and impiety,) is indeed an excellent method to avoid ſlander; but even then not always an effectual one: Many of the reformers did ſo, and yet could not eſcape being involved in the cenſure which fell upon the impious ſects which pretended to reform as well as they. Nay, the apoſtles themſelves, whoſe example you here recommend, as acting in conformity to the Bible, yet were *ſlanderouſly reported of.* Which the great apoſtle of the gentiles thought proper to contradict, and condemn the ſlanderers by a publick inſtrument.

Jewel's

[a] Wall's Infant Baptiſm, p. 3. [b] John iii. 5.
[c] Matth. xviii 3. See Bulling. Hiſt. Anabapt. p. 53. for this and the following inſtances.

Jewel's Apology paſſed a long time for the authentick ſtandard of the church of England's doctrine: but whom did it ſatisfy or convince? or what peace did it procure for them? [d] They did not expect peace from Papiſts, from whoſe tyranny and oppreſſions they had withdrawn themſelves; but to clear themſelves from the charge of being Arians, Socinians, or Anabaptiſts: and this they did ſo effectually, that the ſpawn of thoſe hereticks are angry to this day that they have ſo totally diſclaimed them. But it had by no means been ſufficient to have ſaid that they deſired to have their doctrine and practice examined by the Bible, if they did not declare what their doctrine and practice was. It had been objected, You hold ſuch opinions, and juſtify ſuch actions. To ſay, We do not, but we condemn ſuch opinions as errors, and puniſh ſuch actions as offences, was a good anſwer. To ſay only, We believe the Bible, whoſe authority had been perverſely urged in maintenance of both, muſt have been taken for an evaſion. With reſpect to Jewel's Apology, we may anſwer your queſtion by another, *Whom did it* not *ſatisfy, except* Papiſts and ſectaries? Nay, even of thoſe his work might ſatisfy and convince many; and by the eſteem in which it hath always been held, we have reaſon to think it did, though we may not be able now to name them. If you think no written defence of any opinion doth good, why do you write one? Yet had the church of England been content with Jewel's book, or the works of any ſingle man, it would have been ſaid they were no ſufficient proof of the doctrine of the CHURCH of England: and if a general declaration had been made only by the men of that age, neither enemies nor friends

[d] Confeſſ. p. 104.

friends would have had ſufficient aſſurance what was the belief of the clergy in following ages. So that the Apology could not *do the work of that more authentick ſyſtem*, the XXXIX Articles. And after deſcribing this Apology as having done nothing, you gravely tell us, *had the reformers contented themſelves with this method of defence, they might have purſued it without any complaint:* from their enemies, you mean; which I readily aſſent to: and thence infer, that the Apology was no ſuch uſeleſs method of defence as you wiſhed us to have made uſe of, becauſe it provoked that *bulky volume of controverſy* which you mention.

But at length you give the reformers leave to frame apologies and articles too. *The fault you find with them is not for declaring their faith; but ſetting up theſe declarations and defences as teſts of orthodoxy, and binding them on the conſciences of thoſe who had as much right to diſſent from them, as they had to diſſent from popery.*[e] So that having before permitted the church of England to write apologies, provided they are ſuch as *ſatisfy and convince nobody*; you now extend your grace, and permit her to believe what ſhe pleaſes, even that 'the Divine Power, which we call God . . . is 'diſtinguiſhed into three equal perſons, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, all of the ſame 'power, of the ſame majeſty, of the ſame eternity, of the ſame Divinity, and of the ſame 'ſubſtance;'[f] PROVIDED, that ſhe does not require that her people ſhould be taught the ſame faith which ſhe profeſſes, and will beſtow her rewards on thoſe who teach contrary to her doctrine. — But *ſhe binds them on the conſciences of thoſe who diſſent.* — How ſo? She found herſelf inſlaved to errors in the church of Rome: theſe ſhe freed herſel

[e] Confeſſ. p. 105. [f] Jewel's Apol. cap. 2.

herſelf from, reſtoring the faith as ſhe found it generally aſſented to in the ſix firſt centuries. She found, in the rupture with Rome, many impious and extravagant opinions poured in, from which much ſlander fell upon her: from theſe ſhe vindicated herſelf, by declaring her abhorrence of them, and taking care that her diſciples ſhould be inſtructed to avoid them. If any man's conſcience is hurt by aſſenting to the faith of the primitive church in the ſix firſt centuries, or in renouncing the tyrannous errors of Rome, or the impieties of extravagant ſectaries, what does ſhe do? does ſhe compel them to come in? No: but till it pleaſes God to enlighten the eyes of their underſtanding, to diſcern their errors, ſhe will not commit her diſciples to the care of theſe people. —— But *they had as much right to diſſent from her, as ſhe had to diſſent from popery.* — If a ſtrong perſuaſion, raiſed by ſecular or carnal motives, will not excuſe any for miſtaking and acting contrary to the goſpel, then ſome at leaſt of the ſectaries had no right to diſſent from the church of England, while yet ſhe had a right to diſſent from popery. Yet ſuppoſe the right equal, the preſent diſſenters from the church of England have reaſon to bleſs God for her moderation, that they may diſſent from her with infinitely leſs peril than her reformers riſqued in diſſenting from Rome. They would not diſturb the ſociety for indifferent things or trifling ceremonies, but they diſdained a lie. They patiently endured tortures, and even loſs of life, for the ſake of truth; while the adverſaries of the church of England rage, becauſe ſhe will not beſtow her emoluments upon them, and reward them for endeavouring to ſubvert her.

The

The variety of ſects amongſt the reformers *was a matter of fact, which neither could nor ought to have been denied.*[g] It was not: but that their impiety or extravagance was *owing to the intolerant ſpirit of ſome of the reformers*, has no foundation in hiſtory, and is a calumny which you venture not openly to avow, though you inſidiouſly recommend the belief of it in the form of a queſtion: and that an appeal to the *actual ſeparation* of them from the church of England was a ſufficient anſwer to thoſe who affected not to be able to diſtinguiſh them, is ſomething difficult to underſtand, when you contend that there ſhould be no *actual ſeparation*, but that all ſhould communicate together, and all teachers be admitted to propagate what doctrines they pleaſed.

The other circumſtance which, according to biſhop Burnet, made a copious confeſſion more neceſſary for the reformed church of England, was, ‘ *that con-* ‘ *cealed Papiſts being brought to this teſt, might not* ‘ *creep into the church unawares, and ſecretly un-* ‘ *dermine it.*’ *This may go far towards excuſing Cranmer and Ridley for contriving ſuch a teſt: but the meaſure was ineffectual; becauſe many complied who were all the while Papiſts, and became bloody perſecutors in Queen Mary's days. . . . This therefore will by no means juſtify Queen Elizabeth's biſhops for continuing ſuch a teſt. . . . much leſs the impoſers of ſubſcription in all ſucceding times.*[h] King Edward's mandate to the biſhops, to require their clergy to ſubſcribe, was only one month before his death; ſo that Queen Elizabeth's biſhops had not ſufficient experience of the ineffectualneſs of this meaſure to diſſuade them from continuing it; nor does biſhop Burnet confeſs that they had, though you are pleaſed to affirm it of him: but they

[g] Confeſſ. p. 105. [h] Confeſſ. p. 108—110.

they certainly had experience that many Papiſts refuſed ſubſcription to our articles in her days; and if ſome of them complied with it, what could ſhe have tried with greater likelihood to keep them out, than what was ſeen actually to keep out multitudes? And the impoſers of ſubſcription in all ſucceding times may innocently purſue a method to avoid controverſies in the pulpit, and *eſtabliſh godly concord and conſent touching true religion*, where the articles are found agreeable to ſcripture, or not proved contrary to it; eſpecially as they find by experience that it keeps out great numbers both of Papiſts and enthuſiaſtick teachers from claiming our pulpits, and a right to ſeduce the people.

Elizabeth . . thought it right to humor the Papiſts, and for that purpoſe made very conſiderable abatements in thoſe terms of proteſtant communion [the articles] *which were inſiſted on in Edward's ſyſtem. Among other things the reviewers of his articles ſtruck out a long paſſage againſt the real preſence.*[1] It could not be deſigned by Queen Elizabeth's articles to humor Papiſts, ſo many of them being utterly inconſiſtent with popery. On the whole, there is more in them againſt popery than in thoſe of Edward VI. I think the only clauſe againſt popery in his, that was left out in hers, is that againſt *the corporal preſence*: and inſtead of it there is put in one, which comes nearly, if not quite, to the ſame thing in other words. And how an omiſſion to condemn *the real preſence* could reconcile Papiſts, while the reformers ſtill inſiſted in that very article, that tranſubſtantiation was repugnant to the plain words of ſcripture, is not very obvious. Biſhop Burnet mentions not the Papiſts in the paſſage referred to; but only ſays, 'The

[1] Confeſſ. p. 110.

'The Queen and her council ſtudied to unite *all* 'into the communion of the church. And it 'was alledged, that ſuch an expreſs definition a-'gainſt a real preſence might drive from the 'church *many* who were ſtill of that perſuaſion.' Why muſt theſe neceſſarily be the Papiſts? There might be good Proteſtants in England, who believed conſubſtantiation, as Cranmer did for ſome time after he was a Proteſtant, and as the Lutherans do ſtill. It might be thought both policy and charity to treat them with ſome indulgence: and theſe ſhould ſeem *rather* to have been meant, as the Papiſts are expreſsly condemned in this and many other articles. Nay, neither is Dr. Burnet ſo ſure that comprehenſion was the true reaſon of the omiſſion, but that he ſuggeſts another; which is, that in the beginning of the article the compilers had gone 'too much upon the principles 'of natural philoſophy; which, how true ſo-'ever, might not be the proper ſubject of an ar-'ticle of religion,'[k] The biſhop therefore is only *gueſſing* at their reaſon; and, if others might gueſs too, might they not think that the denial of ANY *real preſence* ſeemed to claſh with the former part of the article, where it is ſaid, 'To ſuch as 'rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the 'ſame [ſacrament,] the bread which we break is 'a partaking of the body of Chriſt.'[l] So that the ſuppoſed *inconſiſtences* in biſhop Burnet, which you ſay *are unavoidable, even by the greateſt and beſt of men, when they find themſelves under a neceſſity of defending eccleſiaſtical inſtitutions only becauſe they are eſtabliſhed*, appear to be only a dream of your own. There was not the leaſt inconſiſtence between defending our preſent articles on account of the neceſſity of excluding concealed

[k] Burnet's Expoſit. p. 308. [l] Article XXVIII.

cealed Papiſts out of the church, and relating, or even approving, Queen Elizabeth's reaſons for omitting ſo explicit a determination againſt the corporal preſence, as was in K. Edward's Articles. Concealed Papiſts (I mean ſuch as any thing could exclude) would be ſufficiently excluded by the other articles: and ſome moderation in this might keep united to the church of England, perſons, who, though far from being Papiſts in other points, or indeed completely ſo in this, might ſtill believe a real preſence. It was reckoned, as biſhop Burnet expreſſes it, 'that if that age could 'have been on any terms ſeparated from the pa- 'pacy, though with allowance for many other 'ſuperſtitious conceits, it would once unite them all; and in the next age they would be ſo educated, that none of thoſe ſhould any more remain.'[m] Which expectations were defeated, not by the articles framed with ſuch moderation, but by the intrigues of popiſh princes; by fomenting diviſions among us, and counteracting the education to which thoſe articles would have been ſubſervient, by founding ſeminaries at Doway, Lovain, and St. Omers.

The prudent moderation of the church abovementioned cannot juſtly be cenſured; for though the practice of becoming *all things to all men, in order to gain ſome*, may be carried too far, yet it may alſo be too much neglected.

You tell us in the note,[n] *This mutilation of the article concerning the real preſence was one of thoſe things which drove the antient Puritans out of the eſtabliſhed church.* Why then do you not charge the Puritans here, as you do the biſhops elſewhere, with binding things on the conſciences of men, or at leaſt wanting to bind them? Why is not a

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[m] Hiſt. Ref. vol. II. p. 400. [n] At p. 111.

piece of nonſenſe about the corporal preſence as tolerable as many other opinions? If you would have *no* articles of faith ſubſcribed, why are you ſo angry at leaving out *one* clauſe in a ſubſcription, and give ſo invidious an interpretation of the omiſſion? Why do you not praiſe the compilers of Elizabeth's articles for leaving out ſeveral condemnations which are in thoſe of Edward VI? and where are the very conſiderable abatements which you ſay Queen Elizabeth made in the terms of proteſtant communion, to humor the Papiſts? Or would you have ſubſcriptions againſt Papiſts, and them only? Beſides, Burnet does not ſay this drove the Puritans out of the church, but that it was was a thing of which, amongſt others, they complained.[o] And if they did leave it for this, they were ſo far not driven out, but ran out wildly, without reaſon.

You inform us, that the *real preſence* is one of the circumſtances which both popiſh and proteſtant writers have brought, to ſhew the very little difference there is between the churches of Rome and England, and quote Davenport and Heylin.[p] But do you not know that Davenport's attempt was ſhamefully weak and unfair? and that Heylin thought the difference was very great, though not ſo great as it is? At page 39 of the Introduction you mention, he reckons no leſs than ſeventeen points, in which the church of England *totally diſagrees with her ſiſter of Rome.* And can you read over the XXXIX Articles, and ſay the difference is but little? If not, why do you thus diſingenuouſly inſinuate it?

However, concerning the extent of that authority by which our articles were eſtabliſhed, and ſubſcription to them injoined, you *make no ſcruple to affirm,*

[o] Hiſt. Ref. p. 335. note 334. [p] P. 1114

firm, that no such authority is vested in the church, and charge it with *injoining assent and consent to human creeds and confessions, which appear not to those, of whom such assent and consent are required, to be in perfect agreement with the word of God.*[q] We do not *injoin* assent and consent, nor encroach on private judgement. We have often fully declared and proved that we do not.[r] You therefore ought to consider seriously, whether you act fairly and honestly in accusing us of it; and whether you do not write against your conscience, to indulge your passions, and bring an odium upon the governours of the established church. Your injurious treatment of them, as far as you had power, (of which the reader must have had abundant proof,) will probably incline him to think that they are greater friends to liberty, and the rights of private judgement, than you would be if you had power in your hands. The legislature may enact a national religion, with a toleration of such as dissent from it. This it hath done now; and we are not bound to defend all that was done formerly. And you yourself acknowledge, that *it was indeed the business and the duty, both of the civil and ecclesiastical power, to promote Christian edification among the people; for which the word of God hath made sufficient room, without breaking in upon Christian liberty: and if this Christian liberty be abused by absurd and licentious men, so as to endanger the peace, and subvert the*

[q] Confess. p. 112.

[r] Among many others see, *Church of England vindicated*, 1739, against the *Old Whig*, 1737. Rem. II. p. 19—21. Rem. V. p. 56. X. p. 78, 79. XI. p. 94, 95. XIV. p. 108, 109. et passim. *Stebbing's Rational Enquiry*, 1720, against Bp. Hoadley, p. 35—40. Also *Mr. White's Letter to Mr. S. Chandler*, 1749, p. 51, 57. And, *A full and particular Reply to Mr. Chandler's Case of Subscription*, 1749. Rem. I. p. 7, 9, 13, 21.

the order of civil ſociety, here the civil magiſtrate has his right of interpoſing reſerved to him by the Goſpel itſelf.[s] May I not here apply ſome of your own words to you, ſir? *Theſe inconſiſtences are unavoidable, even by the greateſt and beſt of men, when they find themſelves under* a diſpoſition to quarrel with the eſtabliſhment *only* becauſe they are not intitled to the emoluments of it? That this indeed is your quarrel, you plainly enough declare: *The ſtate and the church are cordially agreed to continue theſe articles as ſtandards of orthodoxy, and the* SUBSCRIPTION TO THEM AS AN INDISPENSABLE CONDITION OF HOLDING ANY PREFERMENT *in the church of England.*[t]

You ſpeak as if you *demanded or attempted no more* than that men *be permitted to believe and worſhip, peaceably and ſincerely, in their own way.*[u] Do you attempt no more? Do you not attempt to deprive the national church of that ſecurity for being inſtructed by miniſters of ſound faith, which the law gives them? Indeed would you not deſtroy national churches? Anſwer ingenuouſly.

Biſhop Burnet's next endeavours are laid out in explaning, 1. *the uſe of the articles*; *and* 2. *the importance of the clergy's ſubſcribing them. By the* USE *of the articles, one would ſuppoſe his lordſhip meant their* UTILITY *to the church. But —— he procedes to tell us, that, with reſpect to the laity, they are only articles of church communion. I deſire to know what layman is, or ever was, required, either to ſubſcribe or ſolemnly to declare his aſſent to them, as a qualification for communion with the church of England.*[w] The biſhop no where ſuppoſes it; and rejects from church communion

[s] Confeſſ. p. 115.
[t] Confeſſ. p. 116.
[u] Confeſſ. p. 115.
[w] Confeſſ. p. 117.

'no perſon who does not think that there is ſome 'propoſition in them [the articles] that is erro-'neous to ſo high a degree, that he cannot hold 'communion with ſuch as profeſs it.'[x] He diſtinguiſhes betwixt articles of faith, and articles of doctrine. The firſt, as neceſſary to ſalvation, muſt be believed; but as you well obſerve, *not becauſe they are contained in the* XXXIX *Articles*, but as contained in the creeds, when they ſolemnly profeſs, in the preſence of God, I BELIEVE. The other, the articles of doctrine 'are to her 'lay ſons only a ſtandard of what ſhe teaches;' with reſpect to which 'the people may continue 'to join in communion with us, though they 'may not be fully ſatisfied with every propoſition 'in them.'[y] The uſe of them to the laity is, a plan of inſtruction, drawn up by conference of the moſt learned men then in the nation, not one of whom, *ſingly*, it may be ſuppoſed, could have drawn up a plan ſo unexceptionable: much leſs uſeful would it have been to have intruſted their inſtruction to the ignorance, whim, or craftineſs of private teachers, leſs capable and leſs honeſt. And if, (as they were fallible men,) any error ſhould afterwards be diſcovered in the plan, ſuch errors, when diſcovered, were to be amended by their ſucceſſors.

You *apprehend a refuſal to ſubſcribe the articles in ſome caſes amounts to ſomething equivalent with affirming them to be erroneous.*[z] The vehemence of your temper may prompt you to ſuch an imagination; but were an eccleſiaſtical judge to act upon it, his ſuperiors would convince him of his miſtake. And in the ſame paragraph you charge, either *the biſhop with having been miſtaken in his interpretation of the canon*, which declares thoſe excommunicated

[x] Introd. p. 6. [y] Introd. p. 7. [z] Confeſſ. p. 120.

excommunicated who affirm any of the articles to be erroneous; or *the church with a relaxation of diſcipline, extremely diſhonorable to her governours, and highly ſcandalous to her members.* And why not extremely honorable to her governours, and highly ſatisfactory to her members? What could be better done, than to let an over-ſevere canon, made when no ſet of men ſufficiently underſtood the extent of Chriſtian liberty, fall into deſuetude, and thus virtually repeal it? Perhaps indeed this and others, deſigned *in terrorem*, were never executed. But if they were, ceaſing to execute them would, to a man of the leaſt candor, be matter of praiſe, not reproach. But you conceive that ſpiritual governours can do nothing right, be they ſtrict, or be they gentle. *But this*, you ſay, *is a matter of fact, which proves to a demonſtration, that our* XXXIX *Articles, conſidered as articles of church-communion, are of no manner of uſe to the church, or ſignificance to the laity.*[a] A ſtandard of doctrine is of uſe to the church, as a perpetual apology to vindicate her from falſe aſperſions, and a guide to her members: and biſhop Burnet hath ſhewn that they are ſtill of ſignificance to the laity, as they enable them to judge whether we maintain any opinion that ſhould make communion with us unlawful.

You charge Dr. Stebbing as one who hath *attempted to bring the laity under the obligation of aſſenting to article-doctrine by way of implication.*[b] If you mean aſſenting to all the doctrines of the XXXIX Articles, this is notoriouſly falſe. The doctor hath no where made the leaſt attempt of that kind, and certainly would have oppoſed ſuch an attempt moſt earneſtly. You add, in the note,

[a] Ibid. [b] Conſeſſ. p. 121, and note.

that the doctor *bluſhes not to ſay there is the ſame need of human explications of ſcripture words with reſpect to lay communion, that there is with reſpect to miniſterial communion.* And why ſhould he bluſh to ſay it? Let thoſe bluſh who miſunderſtand or miſinterpret him. He doth not ſay there is need that lay communicants ſhould aſſent to all the ſame human explications of ſcripture words that clergymen do; nor that the need of their aſſenting to any ſuch is the ſame in degree and importance: ſameneſs of kind is ſufficient. The doctor ſufficiently explanes himſelf thus: 'For the 'holding the faith of the goſpel is neceſſary in 'both caſes; and a general belief that the ſcrip-'tures are the word of God is no evidence of this 'in either.'[c] On this you aſk, *No evidence of what? I ſuppoſe he means, no evidence of communion with any particular church which eſpouſes theſe human explications.* Now he certainly doth not mean this: and if you will review the paſſage coolly, you will ſee he means that a general belief that the ſcriptures are the word of God is no evidence of a man's holding the faith of the goſpel. A preſumption it is, and in ordinary caſes a ſufficient preſumption; but not a ſufficient evidence in all caſes: for a man may believe the Bible, and yet miſunderſtand it in articles eſſential to the faith of the goſpel. Perhaps you may not bluſh to deny this; but I hope the affirmers of it are ſtill enough to keep one another in countenance. Nay, I doubt whether you yourſelf will deny it. The church of England believes the Bible; yet you ſpeak, Pref. p. 1. of a perſon whoſe ſentiments ſeem much the ſame with your own, as *vulnerable in point of his conformity to that church.* At leaſt, you will ſurely not

[c] Ration. Eng. p. 77.

not think that all perſons who do, or in any age ever did, believe the Bible, let them believe or diſbelieve whatever they will elſe, (conſider well how far that reaches,) are and were entitled to Chriſtian communion. And if not, ſome may have given ſuch ground of ſuſpicion that they are not entitled to it, that there may be need of aſking explanations: for profeſſing to believe ſuch and ſuch words of ſcripture, without declaring in other words how they underſtand them, gives no more light, in ſome caſes, than profeſſing to believe ſcripture in general. Such a general profeſſion was not the original one; for there were multitudes of Chriſtians before the New Teſtament was written: and undoubtedly, after the ſeveral books of it were written, multitudes were converted before they knew that ſuch books exiſted. The apoſtles gave no directions for ſubſtituting at any time this confeſſion of faith in the ſcripture, inſtead of the preceding one. There is no trace of its being ſubſtituted in any one of the primitive churches; and other confeſſions have been uſed down to this day. There are certainly difficulties concerning the doctrine of fundamentals, which vary according to mens various capacities and opportunities: but theſe difficulties neither warrant the church of Rome in making *every thing* a fundamental which their councils have determined; nor you, nor biſhop Hoadley, in making belief of the ſcriptures *the only one.* There would be difficulties found in theſe extremes, as well as in the middle way: and ſingle perſons and churches muſt judge for themſelves as well as they can, avoiding, with charity and prudence, over-great rigor and over-great latitude; and muſt bear with one another as far as they can, when their judgements differ.

You interpret biſhop Bull, (ſtill in the ſame note,) as holding, that *the laity are obliged to acknowledge fundamentals, not as they are contained in the* XXXIX *Articles, (for then they muſt ſubſcribe aſſent to thoſe articles,) but as they lie in the ſcriptures: which*, you ſay, *implies, that the church of England thinks this general acknowledgement ſufficient evidence of the communion of her lay members with her.*[t] But evidently, acknowledging fundamentals as they are contained in the articles, (unleſs you mean *becauſe* they are contained in the articles, which is no reaſon for acknowledging them,) doth not infer aſſenting to the non-fundamentals that are in the articles. And acknowledging fundamentals becauſe they are contained in ſcripture, is a very different thing from a general acknowledgement of the truth of ſcripture: and thinking the former ſufficient by no means implies thinking the latter ſufficient. And it is notorious that biſhop Bull did not think the latter was ſufficient.

As to the *importance* of the clergy's ſubſcription, which you procede next to examine, I ſuppoſe you apprehend it is of *ſome*, by the great pains you have taken in endeavouring to ſhew that it is of *none*.

The biſhop begins this part of the caſe with obſerving, that 'the title of the articles bears, that 'they were agreed upon in convocation, for THE 'AVOIDING DIVERSITIES OF OPINIONS, AND 'THE ESTABLISHING OF CONSENT TOUCHING 'TRUE RELIGION.' *Such a conſent*, you infer, *as is abſolutely excluſive of* ALL *diverſities of opinions.*[u] But the biſhop could mean only diverſities of opinions about points expreſſed and decided in the articles, not about others: and ſuch

[t] Ibid. [u] Conſeſſ. p. 122.

ſuch conſent as is poſſible and requiſite, not ſuch as is impoſſible and not requiſite, to be obtained by this method. Now it may be impoſſible to prevent one perſon from ſubſcribing in a different ſenſe from another, becauſe he may underſtand one or more parts of the articles in a different ſenſe. Whether the ſuppoſed ſenſe of the ſubſcriber, or the literal grammatical ſenſe, be taken for the rule, men may differ about either. And ſuch part or parts of the article may be true in the ſenſe of each of theſe perſons, provided neither contradicts the ſcripture, or reaſon, or the other part or parts of the article. Still ſuch different interpretations are not likely to be frequent amongſt perſons of honeſt minds. And perhaps the differences of opinion, among ſuch perſons, that are taken for different interpretations of the articles, are, generally ſpeaking, only different judgements concerning ſomething which lies beyond what the articles have determined: and therefore what they have determined may, for the moſt part by far, though not always, be ſubſcribed in the ſame ſenſe by *honeſt* men; for nothing can bind others: and ſo they may be, and doubtleſs are, very uſeful to aſcertain what are the opinions of thoſe who aſſent to them.

You aſk, *what pretence there can be for conſtruing ſubſcription into a ſimple declaration of the ſubſcriber's opinion, in a certain literal grammatical ſenſe, different from the literal grammatical ſenſe of another ſubſcriber?*[f] I ſuppoſe, therefore, that you would have the original ſenſe of the compilers followed. But might it not as well be aſked then, what pretence there can be for conſtruing ſubſcription into a declaration of the ſubſcriber's opinion, in a certain original ſenſe, different from the

[f] Ibid.

the original ſenſe of another ſubſcriber? Such things cannot be abſolutely prevented in either caſe; and it may often be impoſſible to know the intention of the compilers otherwiſe than from the literal ſenſe of their words, as I have already obſerved. The compilers might be, and certainly in ſome things were, of different opinions.[z] And ſuppoſing them men of temper alſo, they would of courſe agree to uſe terms expreſſing in what they agreed, without determining any thing in matters in which they did not agree: which is a very different thing from uſing ambiguous terms. But even ſuppoſing that in theſe caſes they deſignedly uſed ambiguous ones, where they knew that either ſenſe was conſiſtent with Chriſtianity: nay, ſuppoſing the terms leaned rather to one ſenſe than another, yet ſuppoſing them to know that they might, in their literal and grammatical ſenſe, fairly expreſs either; they might well and wiſely take this method, on purpoſe, to preſerve their own Chriſtian liberty, and that of thoſe who ſhould come after them: and favorable ſuppoſitions, not unfavorable ones, ought to be made where there is room for them. Still this literal ſenſe muſt be a natural one, and ſuch as they *might* mean; not an unnatural one, and ſuch as they *could not* mean. And allowing men to ſubſcribe in a literal ſenſe of this kind is neither Jeſuitical, nor weak and contemptible caſuiſtry, though it ſhould produce, what it rarely will, ſubſcriptions in different meanings, or, what it ſcarce ever will, in contrary ones.

You think biſhop Burnet's expoſition was *contrary to his own ſentiments, as appears from a piece he was obliged to publiſh in his own vindication, while the ſheets of his expoſition were hardly dry from*

[z] See Dr. Nichols on the Articles, p. 3.

from the preſs.[h] The ſheets of the expoſition muſt have taken an extraordinary long time to dry, if they were hardly ſo when the biſhop's remarks came out; that piece not being publiſhed till the third year after the expoſition was printed. Nor was he obliged to publiſh his remarks in his own vindication from the number of the writers againſt his expoſition, or the general diſſatisfaction it gave: for he ſays, page 1, 'Few books have 'been written on a better authority than that of 'a ſovereign and a ſuperior: few books have been 'more ſtrictly examined, and more candidly cen-'ſured: and . . . few books have been more 'read, and BETTER RECEIVED: and for a year 'after there was ſo general an acquieſcing in the 'book, that it did not then appear that ANY 'THING was found out to be objected to it.' And at the time when he publiſhed his remarks, he ſpeaks as if he knew of only *two* perſons who had written againſt the expoſition. And of one of theſe he ſays, 'I never yet ſpoke with any per-'ſon that thought there was any ſingle paſſage in 'it that altered their thoughts of any part of my 'book: as in the reading it over I did not feel 'any one part of it that pinched, or that would 'diſpoſe me to alter any one word in a ſubſe-'quent edition.' Does it then *plainly appear* from this piece, that the biſhop was diſſatisfied with his own expoſition, and that he wrote it contrary to his own ſentiments? or that the general offence given by his expoſition was ſo great, and ſo immediately purſued it, that he was obliged to publiſh a vindication of himſelf, *while the ſheets of the expoſition were hardly dry from the preſs?* What the biſhop would have thought of ſuch bold cenſurers and miſrepreſenters, you may ſee at

[h] Confeſſ. p. 123.

at page 5 of that book, and the reader may judge by the following paſſage. 'I know there is a 'ſort of people, among whom bold and petu-'lant ſtrains, and ſcornful and virulent invectives, 'paſs for characters of aſſurance and victory. 'But let ſuch writers triumph as much as they 'pleaſe, with their factious herd, men of better 'tempers and riper judgements have another re-'liſh, and are inclined to ſuſpect every thing that 'is ſet forth with ſo little of common decency, 'not to ſay Chriſtianity.'

The *enlargement of ſenſe*, which he mentions as giving offence to the Calviniſts, and as neceſſary to juſtify the Arminian ſubſcription, was not giving a *new* ſenſe to the articles which was never intended by the compilers, but an *opening* of their ſenſe, which Calviniſtical expoſitors had confined; *leaving the articles open*, as he explanes himſelf, *to thoſe of another perſuaſion*. And ſuch *opening* was as neceſſary for himſelf as for thoſe of the Arminian ſide; for he ſays in his preface, 'I think 'it may be fitting to own, that I follow the 'doctrine of the Greek church, from which St. 'Auſtin departed.' [j]

But *if there was good foundation for this enlargement of ſenſe, what cauſe could the good biſhop give the Calviniſts to complain?* [k] The good biſhop *gave* none: but the Calviniſts, uſed to confine the ſenſe, *took* offence: he does not ſay, *the Calviniſts have cauſe*, but they *may* THINK *they have cauſe given them to complain*. And ſo thought the Arminians too: but as the Calviniſts had long *claimed* the articles on their ſide, the biſhop might be ſurpriſed that thoſe of the Arminian ſide ſhould

[j] Burnet's Expoſit. pref. p. 6.
[k] Confeſſ. p. 124.

ſhould quarrel at an enlargement of ſenſe which left the articles open to their perſuaſion.

The Arminian ſenſe, you peremptorily aſſert, *is certainly not the original ſenſe of the articles: nor is it a ſenſe that they will naturally receive. It is a ſenſe which was never once in the heads of thoſe who compiled them.*[l] Neither was the Calviniſtical ſenſe the original ſenſe of the articles: they were intended to reject the extreme errors of both ſides. That the Arminian ſenſe, ſo far as it means opinions as publiſhed by Arminius, never entered into the compilers heads, is moſt true, but no great diſcovery; becauſe Arminius then had publiſhed no opinions at all, as he flouriſhed not till the beginning of the 17th century: but if you mean to deny, that the compilers intended to condemn ſome Calviniſtical conſequences and exceſſes, which He alſo afterwards condemned, then you deny a manifeſt truth. This appears from the *Reformatio Legum*, where, among the hereticks condemned, are reckoned 'ſuch aſſertors of 'predeſtination and reprobation as charge their 'crimes on the will of God, and take no care to 'reform their lives, from a perſuaſion, either 'that they are reprobated, and therefore amend-'ment will be uſeleſs; or predeſtinated, and then 'it is unneceſſary. Wherefore all men are 'warned againſt applying to themſelves ſuch 'decrees, but that they direct their whole courſe 'of life by God's laws expreſſed in ſcripture.'[m] They likewiſe condemn thoſe who hold, 'that 'men

[l] Ibid.

[m] Quapropter omnes nobis admonendi ſunt, ut in actionibus ſuſcipiendis AD DECRETA PRÆDESTINATIONIS SE NON REFERANT, ſed univerſam vitæ ſuæ rationem AD DEI LEGES SE ACCOMMODENT, cum et promiſſiones bonis et minas malis, in ſacris ſcripturis GENERALITER PROPOSITAS, contemplentur. De hæreſ. cap. 22.

'men once juſtified can never after fall into ſin, 'or that God will not account it for ſin in *them*.'[n] So far the articles were Arminian, unleſs you can ſuppoſe that the ſame men, in the ſame year, condemned the ſame opinions as hereſies, and yet recommended them as ſound doctrines and neceſſary to be taught the people. With reſpect to the two principle compilers of the articles, Cranmer, it is certain, held the *univerſality* of Chriſt's redemption, which point ſtrikes at the root of the Calvinian ſyſtem, and, as Dr. Whitby affirms, draws all the reſt after it, on which ſide ſoever the truth lies.[o] The other was ſo ſenſible of the dangerous conſequences of both the extremes, fataliſm and abſolute free-will, that he was afraid to expreſs himſelf otherwiſe, on that ſubject, than in ſcripture words.[p] And Melancthon, when Cranmer conſulted him on the ſubject of a general confeſſion, ſpeaking of the doctrine of fataliſm, tells the archbiſhop, 'That the ſtoical diſ-'putes on that ſubject among them at the be-'ginning, were too rough, and horrid, and ſuch 'as were prejudicial to diſcipline.'[q] We hence ſee the reaſon of their caution in drawing up that difficult article; and yet that they certainly meant to condemn the exceſſes both of Pelagius and of Calvin. If the literal and grammatical ſenſe of theſe articles was challenged, both by Lutherans and Calviniſts, as countenancing ſome of their reſpective opinions, they were right in ſo doing; for the articles intended to aſſert what was true and

[n] Etiam illi de juſtificatis perversè ſentiunt, qui credunt illos poſtquam juſti ſemel facti ſunt, in peccatum non poſſe incidere, aut ſi forte quicquam eorum faciunt quæ Dei legibus prohibentur, ea Deum pro peccatis non accipere. Ibid. cap. 9.

[o] On the 5 points, p. 566. [p] Ridley's Letters.

[q] Strype's Life of Cranmer, p. 409.

and agreeable to ſcripture in each of their ſyſtems: if they had *other* opinions *beſide theſe*, and *different from one another*, they were opinions ſuperadded to the articles, and not maintained in them. And both would agree, if both would be content to aſſert nothing further than the article warrants.

You next procede to *examine a royal declaration at the head of our articles, which* you ſuppoſe *to make a conſiderable abatement in the ſtrictneſs of our ſubſcriptions.*[1] I conceive it makes none at all, but only approves and confirms that which had always been the true intent of ſubſcribing. And the rule laid down in it, being evidently the right one, and the *acquieſcing in it* being, as biſhop Burnet ſaith, (Introd. p. 8.) *general*, there was no need of repeting it in ſubſequent reigns. It ſeems indeed ſtrange that no date is put to it: but it ſtands at the head, and is mentioned in the title-page, of the articles reprinted by the King's command, by Bill and Norton, in 4to, 1628, of which a copy is in the archbiſhop's library at Lambeth. And this probably is the firſt edition of it, by king Charles at leaſt. For though Wilkins places it in the year 1627, yet it might be drawn up then, and not printed till the year after. Or printers might then, as they do now, put the name of the ſucceding year to what comes out of their hands in the latter end of the foregoing. Being therefore probably not deſigned to be publiſhed ſeparate, the date of the book of articles, to which it was prefixed, might be thought ſufficient. And the ſignature by the King, and the ſecretary of ſtate, either muſt be omitted for the ſame reaſon, or might not be ſo conſtant in thoſe days.

You

[1] Confeſſ. p. 124.

You ſay indeed, that *it is, for ought that any one knows, a ſpurious declaration.*[*] Yet all along you ſeem to conſider it as a genuine one. And no perſon would have dared to publiſh a *ſpurious* one in this manner. Nor was there need of it: as either of thoſe Kings might eaſily be induced to make the declaration in queſtion, nor would have born ſuch an invaſion of his prerogative. Nor would they, who were diſſatisfied with his declaration, have failed to find out, and make known, the truth.

You imagine, that there were two declarations of this kind, ſomewhat different: which opinion you found on the authority of Dr. Nichols. And the doctor doth indeed ſpeak, p. 3. col. 1. of king James the firſt's declaration, and col. 2. of the declaration of king Charles, publiſhed with the articles, 1630. But his Commentary on the articles is an imperfect work, extending only to article XVI. whereas he had ſignified his intention to write upon them all. It ſeems therefore to have been publiſhed after his death, and probably from a MS. which had not received his laſt correction. In col. 1. he quotes biſhop Burnet on this ſubject, and might haſtily apprehend the biſhop to aſcribe this declaration to James I. which he doth not; but only ſaith, that the occaſion for making it roſe in the reign of James I. In col. 2. he miſtakes the time when king Charles's declaration was publiſhed, as I have ſhewn. And though he aſcribes a declaration in col. 1. to the firſt of theſe Kings, and in col. 2. to the other, he doth not ſpeak of them as two. But further, he makes Charles the firſt, in his declaration, quote the right reverend biſhop of Cheſter: a thing extremely improbable; and I believe nothing

[*] Confeſſ. p. 131.

thing like it was ever known in a royal declaration. And the declaration of Charles I. in 1628 hath no ſuch quotation in it. You think, that King Charles reprinted a declaration made by his father: but would it not have been mentioned in the title-page, as made by his father, and as reprinted? Perhaps it may be thought that his father's pedantry might lead him to quote the biſhop: but his vanity would be as likely to make him reſt the whole on his own authority. And if Charles had reprinted his father's declaration, and this quotation had been part of it, would not this part have been reprinted with the reſt? Yet it certainly was not. Where Dr. Nichols found it, I cannot ſay. Morton was biſhop of Cheſter from 1616 to 1618, and he had written againſt the papiſts. There may be in his writings what is here quoted from him: but the form in which the Dr. puts it, *If* ——— *then may be inferred*, &c. is very unlike the ſtile of a royal declaration. And I ſhould rather think that his MS. in this place was left inaccurate and obſcure, and that his editor had patched it up wrongly, than that there was a declaration with this quotation in it, and another without it. But I agree, ſir, with you in wiſhing that any one, who is able, would further clear up the point.[t]

[t] Prynne, in his Anti-Arminianiſm, p. 4. ſaith, the articles of queen Elizabeth were ratified by king James in 1604, and by king Charles in 1628. But this declaration could not be publiſhed ſo early as 1604; and Prynne mentions no other of king James. Fuller, in his church hiſtory, ſets down the King's inſtructions given to Dr. Davenant, and other divines, going to the ſynod of Dort in 1618, and directions concerning preachers in 1623; but different from this declaration, which he no where ſets down. But in March 1630, he ſaith Dr. Davenant was accuſed of preaching contrary to a declaration of king Charles,

You think, with Dr. Nichols, that the force of this declaration was not deſigned to extend beyond the time of the king who made it.[a] Now I do not apprehend, that even during his time its force was great enough to make any perſon underſtand the meaning of ſubſcription to be different from what he had before, in his own deliberate ſettled judgement, conceived it to be; (for the ſupreme governour of our church is fallible;) but only to confirm thoſe in their ſentiments who approved ſubſcribing in the grammatical ſenſe, and to ſettle the wavering. And this authority, or weight, it would naturally have after that king's deceaſe; and the ſucceſſor, without declaring it, would be taken to approve ſuch ſubſcription,

Charles, lately ſet forth, which had already produced much peace in the church: and he gives Davenant's defence of himſelf, by which the declaration now in queſtion appears to be meant; and there is no mention that it was ever publiſhed by king James. Heylin, in his life of Laud, under the year 1628, ſaith, that ſufficient notice not having been taken of the King's proclamation about controverſies in preaching and writing, June 14, 1626, (mentioned alſo by Ruſhworth, vol. i. p. 412) Laud moved his Majeſty, that the book of articles might be reprinted, and ſuch a declaration placed before them, as might keep them to their native literal and grammatical ſenſe, which the King ordered ſhould be done. And Heylin inſerts it: and ſaith the Calviniſts raiſed great clamors againſt it, and framed a petition for revoking it, which was not preſented: hence came the vote, or vow, of the Houſe of Commons, dated Jan 28, 1628-9, of which I ſhall have occaſion ſoon to ſay more. No mention of ſuch a declaration of king James occurs. Ruſhworth hath not inſerted this declaration in his book: but in vol. i. p. 653, he ſaith, that Feb. 4, 1628-9, the Houſe of Commons fell into debate about the King's declaration, and conceived that Laud and Montague had adviſed him to it. He hath nothing concerning any ſuch declaration by king James. He hath, at p. 64, 65, that King's directions concerning preachers; in which nothing is ſaid about the manner of interpreting the articles.

[a] Confeſſ. p. 125.

ſubſcription, unleſs he declared the contrary. The ſucceſſor indeed could not puniſh any perſon for acting contrary to this declaration; nor do I know that He could legally, who made it; unleſs for ſomething that was a fault before it was made. The doctrine, from which the king ſaith he will not endure any departing in the leaſt degree, is not that of the homilies, as you would repreſent it:[w] of which homilies the XXXVth article ſaith only, in general, that they contain a godly and wholeſome doctrine, and neceſſary for thoſe times; not that there are no miſtakes or omiſſions in them. And the general doctrine of obedience being highly neceſſary in thoſe and at all times, the compilers of them might think it unneceſſary and unſafe to mention the exception of extreme danger to the conſtitution, though they might think it a juſt one.

If *it is not denied*, neither is it granted, *that the literal ſenſe of* thoſe, whom you call, *Arminians, was different from the true ſenſe.*[x] Biſhop Burnet would have ſaid it was as true a ſenſe as the other: And pleaſe to remember that ſome of thoſe, whom you call Arminians, held the ſame doctrines *before* Arminius, or at leaſt without knowing any thing of him, that they did afterwards.

The *quibbling and equivocal terms*, in which you ſay the declaration *is drawn*,[y] might be toſſed, in general, into the heap of ſevere cenſures without proof, with which your performance remarkably abounds: but the ſources, from which you would derive theſe terms, failing, the preſumption, till the contrary is proved, will be, that there are no ſuch terms to be found in it.

[w] Confeſſ. p. 127. [x] Confeſſ. p. 128.
[y] Confeſſ. p. 129.

You ſay they diſcover the diſtreſs of a man in K. James's ſituation; who, as far as appears, was not the king who publiſhed them: and K. Charles, who certainly did publiſh them, was not in the ſituation which you ſay was neceſſary to produce them.

As to *the vow of the houſe of commons*,[z] if they meant by it to condemn ſubſcribing the articles in the grammatical ſenſe, they have acted very conſiſtently in doing it by a form, which hath no grammatical ſenſe in it.

You ſeem to object againſt literal and grammatical interpretation, as introducing *a latitude of ſenſes*.[a] Now, ſir, I preſume you muſt allow that there may be two ſenſes of a propoſition, each of which is *a* true and *an* uſual ſenſe, tho' it cannot be ſaid which is *the* true ſenſe. And it may, perhaps, be of ſmall conſequence in which of thoſe ſenſes it is ſubſcribed. This is your own doctrine with reſpect to ſcripture propoſitions, and therefore you repreſent it as a miſtake in the firſt reformers, that *they thought the true ſenſe of ſcripture could be* BUT ONE.[b] That becauſe there may be *two*, therefore there may be *two hundred* ſenſes of the ſame propoſition, is an adventurous inference of your own, in which I believe few will agree with you: yet you think it ſufficient to ſubſcribe the ſcripture in ANY ſenſe whatever, even of theſe two hundred, if you or any body elſe can torture it into ſo many; why then muſt the articles *neceſſarily* be reſtrained ſo ſtrictly, when you allow ſuch a latitude to the interpretation of ſcripture? And what do you think, ſir, that very houſe of commons, who made the remarkable vow abovementioned; what your

[z] Confeſſ. p. 130.
[a] Confeſſ. p. 133.
[b] Confeſſ. p. 3.

your dear friends the Puritans, in general, of that, of the former, and of ſome later times, would have thought of your propoſal of ſubſcribing *ſcripture alone*, and of you for making it?

And thus you ſhut up your account of the royal declaration, in which you promiſed to be *as accurate, and at the ſame time as candid as poſſible.* As to the author of it, you tell us, you know not whether *it was King James's, or King Charles's, or neither the* one or the other's, *but ſpurious:* as to the ſenſe, it is *quibbling and equivocal.* You do not know whether *it has any conſiſtency or common ſenſe in it:* in ſhort, that *it is doing it too much honor to examine the contents of it, or to ſhew what is really the truth.* And this is the *accurate* and *candid* account with which you are pleaſed to put us off. You had made a miſtake in page 109 of your firſt edition, which you have corrected at page 135 in your ſecond: but if Cranmer was for *general expreſſions*, as it appears he was from the corrected account which you now give of him, then Burnet was in the right in ſaying, that the articles were compoſed with temper, even ſuppoſing him to miſtake in ſaying, that this proceded from Melancthon; which is not at all material. Neither will it follow, that becauſe they were more explicit than they need about the *real preſence*, they were ſo about other things. Their words muſt ſhew where they were ſo, and where not.

CHAP. V. Your next chapter preſents us with *a view of the embarraſſed and fluctuating caſuiſtry of thoſe divines who do not approve of, or differ from, biſhop Burnet's method*

of juſtifying ſubſcription to the XXXIX *Articles of the church of England.*

You endeavour to ſhew that the articles are *uſeleſs*, being deſigned to prevent diverſity of opinions, which they have not done, but rather increaſed it; and that they are univerſally *ſnares to conſcience*, becauſe the orthodox themſelves are forced to fly to prevarication, as well as the heterodox: whence you infer, that both ſhould equally wiſh and endeavour to get rid of the embarraſſment. The method of your argument, blended, as uſual, with perſonal abuſe, ſhall be attended to after I have previouſly conſidered the deſign of the articles, and the meaning of the compilers in them: which I ſhall do without reſpect to any man's plan, but according to the light which the hiſtory of thoſe times holds out.

The temporal and ſpiritual governours of the church of England had obſerved in the church of Rome ſome errors with which they could not in conſcience comply: but many, who continued to believe and teach according to the church of Rome, continued alſo to communicate with the church of England, and preach in it; as did alſo many Arians and Anabaptiſts, and other innovators; crumbling the church into a multitude of ſects, from unwarrantable interpretations of ſcripture, and diſturbing the people with their diverſities of opinions. For the avoiding of ſuch diverſities of opinions, which muſt happen if preachers were permitted publickly to maintain and propagate their ſeveral opinions, the preachers were to give ſecurity to their governours that they would not teach them, but obſerve 'an 'uniform profeſſion, doctrine, and preaching:' not for avoiding *all* diverſities of opinions abſolutely; for doubtleſs, and indeed you admit it,

many

many points of theology have been, (and may be,) *controverted among divines, which are not mentioned in the* XXXIX *Articles*;[c] but 'for the 'eſtabliſhment of godly concord IN CERTAIN 'MATTERS OF RELIGION,' the points then in controverſy. In ſome of theſe it may be preſumed that all the compilers were agreed to guard againſt 'the dangerous opinions and errors' of Arians, Papiſts, and Anabaptiſts. In other points, probably, the firſt compilers themſelves were of different opinions: ſome might think none but epiſcopal ordination valid; others might think this too harſh, with reſpect to thoſe foreign Proteſtants who *could not* have biſhops amongſt them, and conſequently muſt have no ſucceſſion in the miniſtry, if preſbyterian ordination, in ſuch caſes of neceſſity, was not permitted: both agreed againſt the *ſelf-ſent* enthuſiaſts, who aſſumed the office without *any* miſſion. In the church of England none but biſhops have publick authority given unto them in the congregation to ſend miniſters; but if any, appointed by publick authority in foreign churches, where biſhops were not to be had, come over to us, I ſee not, by this article, that they were to be reordained. Thus both parties came to an agreement in the 23d Article; which no otherwiſe admitted different opinions than by comprehending them under one general head, in which the different parties agreed.

What then was the deſign of the compilers in requiring their book of articles to be ſubſcribed? This deſign is expreſſed in the preface to K. Edward's articles, to *root out the diſcord of opinions.* This was their *immediate* deſign; and as it reſpects external actions, muſt mean opinions publickly

[c] Confeſſ. p. 150.

lickly taught, not privately held; for ſo long as they were kept private, though contrary to thoſe publickly taught, they could breed no diſcord: and the effect obtained in ſome meaſure points to the end intended: this was, as biſhop Burnet obſerves,[d] that 'the popiſh biſhops, with the reſt 'of that party of the inferior clergy, continuing 'all that reign [of Edward VI.] to oppoſe every 'thing as long as they might ſafely do it, yet 'complied with every thing when it was once im-'poſed upon them.' But did not they intend that what was ſubſcribed ſhould be believed? Certainly they did: there is no doubt but the compilers and impoſers, for the better effecting their *immediate* deſign of *conſent in certain articles of religion*, did remotely intend and hope to win over the diſſentients to embrace the truth in thoſe certain articles, or elſe to reſtrain them from preaching; and for this purpoſe directed the dioceſans to confer with thoſe who came for orders or inſtitution 'upon every one of thoſe articles,' and if the clerk conſented, 'to cauſe him to ſubſcribe 'them; if not ſatisfied, to lay the ſcripture 'proofs before him, reaſonably and diſcretely to 'move and perſuade him,' and to give him time and ſpace convenient 'to deliberate and give his 'aſſent.'[e] So that, as biſhop Burnet obſerves juſtly, 'thoſe, who ſubſcribed, did either believe 'them [the Articles] to be true, or they did 'groſsly prevaricate.'[f] If the ſubſcription was ſincere, the church obtained what ſhe *ultimately* wiſhed for, conſent in the truth, as the means to avoid diſcord of opinion: if the ſubſcription was not ſincere, the governours at leaſt obtained their

[d] Reflect. on Atterbury's rights, &c. p. 30.
[e] Strype's Mem. vol. II. p. 421.
[f] Hiſt. Ref. vol. II. p. 169.

their next and more *immediate* deſign, that of avoiding diſcord of opinions in preaching. The prevaricators indeed themſelves were criminal: but ſuch men, if they could not be made good, (which their governours endeavoured to do,) were at leaſt tied up from doing miſchief: and the ſcrupulous diſſentients ought not to reſent it as unreaſonable, that they were deſired to ſit among the hearers, till they ſhould be judged ſufficiently inſtructed *in thoſe certain articles* to be appointed to teach others.

As to the meaning of the compilers in thoſe CERTAIN ARTICLES OF RELIGION, the contrary doctrines to which were intended to be avoided, they judged the articles themſelves were ſufficient to point it out. Whatever contradicts the doctrines, diſcipline, or ceremonies there aſcertained or injoined, as agreeable to ſcripture, or not contrary to it, was to be avoided. Whoever thought the grammatical and literal ſenſe of the articles right, was to teach accordingly: whoever thought it wrong, was not to ſubſcribe them, or teach at all. It is objected, that they are expreſſed in ſuch terms as to be capable of ſeveral literal and grammatical ſenſes, contrary to one another: and then it is aſked, Who is to decide which is meant, and which we are to ſubſcribe; or may we ſubſcribe to which we pleaſe? I anſwer, firſt, that this ought not to be pretended oftener than it is true. It is unfair and diſhoneſt in perſons to wreſt words into ſenſes viſibly foreign from that of the place in queſtion, that they may ſubſcribe articles which in their true meaning they do not believe. In the next place, I anſwer, that where there is real room for ſeveral grammatical ſenſes, none muſt be taken for the true one which is contrary to reaſon or ſcripture;

ture; and of ſuch as contradict neither, that which ſeems moſt probable may be taken: but that, on examination, theſe different ſenſes will be found much leſs frequent and important than ſome writers would have them thought to be; and that contrary ſenſes will very ſeldom occur. We are referred, indeed, to many ſubſcribers, who, as we are told, actually maintain contrary opinions as contained in the articles, which they ſeverally ſay are agreeable to ſcripture. For inſtance, biſhop Bull, Drs. Wallis, South, Sherlock, Bennet, *&c.* it is alledged, are not agreed in the firſt and ſecond articles, in their doctrine of the *Trinity:* the ſubſcribers at preſent are ſuppoſed to be divided about the third, *Chriſt's deſcent into hell:* and the generality now ſubſcribe the ſeventeenth in an Arminian ſenſe, while ſome few others ſubſcribe it in a Calviniſtical ſenſe, which you think was the original ſenſe of the article. Now, contrarieties may plauſibly be charged where none are intended or really exiſt; and that on ſeveral accounts.

Firſt, from the incomprehenſibleneſs of the ſubject, which we have neither ideas adequate to conceive, nor words proper diſtinctly and fully to expreſs. *There is one God:* Many who readily and truly ſubſcribe to theſe words, if called upon to explane their meaning, would probably explane themſelves in very *different* manners; which a preciſion, more malicious than wiſe and charitable, might call *contrary.* One, for inſtance, might expreſs himſelf in ſcripture language, and ſay he meant by God, *the* LORD *ſitting upon a throne*; [g] whoſe *hands have made and faſhioned me*; [h] whoſe *eyes are over the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers*; [i] who *loveth righteouſneſs,*

[g] Iſaiah vi. 1. [h] Pſ. cxix. 73. [i] Pſ. xxxiv. 15.

ouſneſs, and hateth iniquity.[k] Another, more metaphyſically deſcribes him as a Being *of infinite power, wiſdom, and goodneſs.* Both may mean the ſame truth, and it would be unjuſt to charge the former as guilty of the anthropomorphite hereſy, when he is as ready as the other to acknowledge that he is *without body, parts, or paſſions.* Again: one may believe from the ſcriptures, that *there is one God the Father*;[l] that his Son Jeſus Chriſt is *God bleſſed for ever, amen*;[m] that they who lie to the Holy Ghoſt, *lie unto God.*[n] Another, from the ſame ſcriptures, that *there is none other God but one.*[o] Theſe may not be contrary to another, if both agree that *in unity of this Godhead there be three Perſons, of one ſubſtance, power, and eternity, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt:* for zeal to aſſert the unity cannot juſtly be charged with Socinianiſm, though ſome unguarded expreſſions eſcape us, unleſs the Divine Perſonalities are denied: nor can an equal zeal to aſſert the Divine Perſonalities be juſtly charged with Tritheiſm, though equally blameable in ſome expreſſions, while they expreſsly maintain the unity of the Godhead. Once more, with reſpect to the Perſons: one, from ſcripture, which declares Chriſt to be *the only begotten Son of the Father,*[p] may infer his equality of nature, or conſubſtantiality with the Father: another, from the ſame ſcriptures, aſſerting that *the Father is greater* than the Son, may infer an œconomical ſubordination: yet, though theſe opinions may, in the mode of expreſſion, appear to be *different*, they are not neceſſarily *contrary*, unleſs either is ſo aſſerted as intentionally to deny the other; becauſe

[k] Pſ. xlv. 7.
[l] Epheſ. vi. 6.
[m] Rom. ix. 5.
[n] Acts v. 3, 4.
[o] 1 Cor. viii. 4.
[p] John i. 14.

cauſe both may conſiſt together, a ſubordination in œconomy, and an equality of nature: and indeed the relation of Father and Son implies both. So alſo with reſpect to the proceſſion of the Son and Holy Ghoſt from the Father, it being aſſerted that the Son *procedeth forth and came from God*, [q] and of the Holy Ghoſt that he *procedeth from the Father*, [r] ſome may rightly infer from ſuch proceſſion, that, as to their nature or eſſence, each muſt be *very and eternal God*; while others, conſidering the proceſſion with reſpect to the προέλευσις εἰς ἐνέργειαν, the proceding of each into action, as far as we are concerned, may ſpeak of it as being in time. All theſe are *different* opinions, liable to be underſtood as the meaning of the articles, but not *contrary*, while the reſpective maintainers of each do not deny the reſt.

Contrarieties may alſo be charged, ſecondly, where a word hath acquired different ſenſes, ſo as to grow into an equivoque. Thus, in the third article, HELL, or *the inviſible ſtate*, when expreſſed in ſcripture by the Hebrew שאול, or the Greek ἅδης, ſignifies *the unſeen place*, the general receptacle of the dead: whether of their bodies or ſouls is not always diſtinctly expreſſed, both being conceived as under ground. The body ſeems to be moſt in view, where mention is made of *bringing a man's grey hairs to* ſheol *with ſorrow*, Gen. xlii. 38. xliv. 31. or *with blood*, 1 Kings xi. 9. or *going down alive into* ſheol, Numb. xvi. 33. or where *the worm* is joined with *ſheol*, Job xvii. 13, 14. xxiv. 19, 20. Other paſſages may be equally underſtood of either, as Pſ. lxxxviii. 1. *My life draweth nigh unto* HELL. Where, however, being explaned in the

[q] John xvi. 28. [r] John xv. 26.

the three following verſes by the *pit*, the *grave*, a *place of darkneſs*, it ſeems rather to relate to the body. But to which ſoever it relates, you are greatly miſtaken, as Pſ. lxxxix. 47. alſo ſhews, when you aſſert, that *the words* hell *and* inferi *never ſignified any thing in the days of the compilers but the place of torment.*[a] Sometimes it evidently ſignifies that *inviſible ſtate* to which the ſpirit goes when ſeparated from the body, comprehending both a place of reſt, and a place of puniſhment; grounded on the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. The firſt is repreſented *in hell, being in torment*; the other comforted in Abraham's boſom. Theſe ſeveral ſtates of reſt and torment were, in the language in which the New Teſtament was written, comprehended under the ſame word ἅδης:

Πολλὰς δ' ἰφθίμους ψυχὰς ἄϊδι προΐαψεν
Ἡρώων. *Iliad* A.

And two different ways to it, that is, to different parts of it, which the good and the bad were to take, are mentioned by Diphilus, in Clem. Alex. Strom. lib. 5. pag. 721. Edit. Potter.

Καὶ γὰρ καθ' ἅδην δύο τρίβους νομίζομεν·
Μίαν δικαίων, ἑτέραν δ' ἀσεβῶν.

And the way to both parts is called a deſcent:

——— *Facilis deſcenſus Averni.* Æn. VI.

And the Jewiſh ideas, in the time of the apoſtles, were agreeable hereto: thus Origen acquaints us that the Jews were inſtructed in the immortality of the ſoul, and that *under the earth there were both judgements and rewards:* Καὶ τὰ ὑπὸ γὴν δικαιώματα, καὶ τὰς τιμὰς τῶν καλῶς βεβιωκότων. *Contr. Celſ.*

[a] Confeſſ. p. 182.

Celſ. l. 5. Such being the Jewiſh opinions, and ſuch the meaning of the word ἅδης in the language in which the evangeliſt wrote, we may underſtand St. Luke in this manner: *The rich man* in Hades, *being in torment, ſaw Abraham,* (in Hades alſo, but) *afar off, and Lazarus in his boſom.* This is confirmed from the opinions of the primitive Chriſtians: Irenæus ſays, *the ſouls of Chriſtians go to an inviſible place, appointed them by God: Animæ abibunt in inviſibilem locum, deſtinatum eis a Deo.*[t] And Andrew, archbiſhop of Cæſarea in Cappadocia, in his comment on the Revelations, cap. 64, ſays, *Hell is an unſeen, inviſible, and unknown place to us, which receiveth our ſouls when we go hence:* [u]Ἅδης . . . τόπος ἡμῖν ἀειδὴς, ἄγνωστος, ὁ τὰς ψυχὰς ἡμῶν ἐντεῦθεν ἐκδημήσας δεχόμενος. They therefore repreſent the rich man and Lazarus as both in Hades, or, as our tranſlation calls it, *hell.* And although St. Auſtin ſays, *he had not yet found where the habitation of the ſouls of the juſt is in ſcripture called* HELL,[u] yet brought into doubt concerning Abraham's boſom, he thinks *it is probable* that there were two hells, divided by the great gulph; in one whereof the ſouls of the juſt were at peace, whilſt in the other the ſouls of the wicked were tormented.[w] After his time the weſtern church more generally underſtood by *inferna*, the place of torments, and by *inferi*, the ſpirits tormented there. I paſs over Calvin's fanciful expoſition, that the deſcent into hell meant Chriſt's ſuffering the pains of the damned upon the croſs, as it is not ſupported by ſcripture, nor will the order of the words of the creed ſuffer us to believe that the deſcent

[t] Lib. V. cap. 26.
[u] Tom. III. de Geneſ. ad literam. Lib. 12. c. 129.
[w] See King on the Creed.

deſcent into hell was underſtood to be before Chriſt's death and burial.

The queſtion is, in which of theſe ſenſes are we to ſubſcribe, or may all be held without that diſcord of opinions which the articles were framed to avoid? When this clauſe was in any creed which had not the mention of the burial, (which is the caſe of the Athanaſian creed,) there was ſeemingly room to underſtand it of the burial: and the omiſſion of the deſcent in other creeds which mention the burial, (which is the caſe of the Nicene creed,) gave a plauſible ground for thinking that the ſame thing was meant in each by different phraſes: but in the apoſtles creed, which hath both, and in our articles, which adds, *it is* ALSO *to be believed that he went down into hell*, each muſt have its diſtinct meaning; and therefore in the other creeds too, it muſt be intended, that not only his body was laid in the *grave*, but ALSO that his ſoul went, during that time, ELSEWHERE: but WHERE? The compilers in Edw. VI.'s time doubtleſs meant, according to the ideas of the weſtern church in that age, that he went to the place of torments, grounding their opinion upon a paſſage of St. Peter, to which they refer: but, on the reviſal of the articles in 1562, the compilers interpretation of that paſſage in St. Peter ſeems to have been doubted; therefore that clauſe was omitted. Had there been nothing in the article to determine the deſcent into hell againſt the ſenſe of burial, that part of the article would have been ambiguous, and might have been underſtood by two different perſons in two meanings quite different, yet not contrary; for both might be true. But, as the ſenſe of burial is excluded, it remains, not ambiguous, but general, expreſſing only, that our Saviour went into the

the inviſible place of departed ſouls. And three perſons may ſubſcribe it in this general ſenſe, and by ſo doing, in the very ſame ſenſe, though one of them may think he went only into the place of torment; the ſecond, only into the place of refreſhment; and the third, into both. Theſe opinions indeed are contrary; but their contrariety ariſes, not from what is contained in the article, but in what they add to it. If the firſt thinks he can prove his opinion, either from St. Peter, or any other way, he may very honeſtly ſubſcribe, and retain it: but the ſecond may as honeſtly ſubſcribe, and ſeems to judge better. The impoſers, as they are called, were perhaps ſome of the one mind, ſome of the other. But if they were, they plainly did not chuſe to expreſs their particular ſentiments in the article; but, like wiſe and good men, left it at large: and ſo they may very well have done in other caſes. Thus,

Thirdly, the contrary opinions, charged on the xviith article are not contained in it, but are conſequences drawn by different men from different parts of it, which the article was not framed to *maintain*, but to *avoid*. The article aſſerts a *predeſtination to life*, or *God's everlaſting purpoſe before the foundations of the world were laid, to deliver from curſe and damnation thoſe whom he hath choſen in Chriſt out of mankind, and to bring them by Chriſt to everlaſting ſalvation*. And, together with the end, to grant alſo the means, effectual calling, juſtification, adoption, ſanctification. Theſe doctrines are all agreeable to ſcripture. But when it is inferred by the fataliſt, that this decree is irreſpective and abſolute, without faith and obedience foreſeen, it is a doctrine (whether true or falſe) *ſuperadded* to the article. Again, if the free-willer ſay, that the article ſuppoſes faith and obedience

obedience foreſeen, it is true; but then it does not determine, whether the foreknowledge of faith and obedience were prior to the decree, or conſequent to it; whether it were *one occaſion* of the decree, or an *effect* of it. If it be urged that the order in which they are mentioned in the article implies that this faith, or working of the ſpirit, and good works are conſequent to the decree, and therefore it cannot be made on a foreſight of them; it is ſufficient to reply that the *actual* working of the ſpirit, and the *actual* production of good works, in the elected, being meant, theſe muſt be mentioned as conſequent to the decree, though the foreknowledge of them were ever ſo certainly a motive to it; but that the article doth not ſay, whether it was a motive or not. The orderly proceſs of predeſtination, after the decree, muſt be conceived, as the article expreſſes it, *deſcendendo*; firſt the decree, then the calling, obeying the call, juſtification, adoption, conformity to Chriſt, and religious walking: but every particular perſon of the elect muſt be left to judge of his own election, *aſcendendo*; for to him the decree is ſecret: but from feeling in himſelf the working of the Spirit of Chriſt, mortifying his fleſh, having his mind drawn to heaven, and a fervent love of God kindled in his ſoul, he may thence infer his election in Chriſt. But to begin with the decree, and to infer, that if it was to life, his own endeavours and good life were unneceſſary, and that, live as he will, being predeſtinated, he ſhall at length by God's mercy attain everlaſting felicity; or if it be to death, that good living is to no purpoſe, for being reprobated, he ſhall, notwithſtanding any good works, be certainly damned: ſuch fataliſm is expreſsly condemned in the article; and all men are en-

couraged to good life by attending to God's promises, *in ſuch wiſe as they are generally ſet forth to us in holy ſcripture*; which require conditions, on our part, of faith and repentance. But if any free-willer from thence infer, that our ſalvation is abſolutely in our own hands, from our own natural powers only, without the aids of grace, ſuch abſolute free-will is condemned in the article, which aſcribes our ſalvation to our being *choſen in Chriſt*: he is the meritorious cauſe; to *the Spirit working in us*; to our *obeying through grace*; to a *juſtification* not due, but *free*; and to everlaſting felicity at length *by God's mercy*.

If from reading the article it could be doubted whether this were the ſenſe of it or not, amongſt the firſt compilers, let the compilers interpret themſelves: *Admonendi ſunt omnes, et præſertim illi qui ſacras apud populum concianes habent, ne in hoc tam ſublimi argumento vel ad dextram vel ad ſiniſtram declinent; id eſt, ut nec liberum arbitrium ita prædicent, ut gratiam Dei afficiant contumeliâ: nec gratiam ſic efferant, ut libero arbitrio locum non relinquant.*[x] That the rigors of Calviniſm were condemned by this article appears from many paſſages in the inſtitutes of it's leader inconſiſtent with it: that Arminius was not condemned by it, is certain; not only becauſe he had not then broached any opinions, but becauſe his opinions were more agreeble to it than Calvin's were. Calvin leads to deſperation, by aſcribing the damnation of the reprobate to *no other cauſe than the ſecret counſel of God. Minimè conſentaneum eſt præparationem ad interitum alio transferre quam ad arcanum conſilium Dei.*[y] While Arminius aſcribes predeſtination to life to the faithful, not becauſe they

[x] Inſtit. Chriſtiani hominis, De libero arbitrio.
[y] Lib. III. cap. 23. N°. I.

they are ſuch from their own merits and natural powers, but from the free grace of God in Chriſt. *Prædeſtinatio . . . . eſt decretum beneplaciti Dei in Chriſto, quo apud ſe ab æterno ſtatuit fideles . . . . vita æterna donare.*—— *Fideles autem dicimus, non qui tales propriis meritis aut viribus erant futuri, ſed qui Dei beneficio gratuito et peculiari in Chriſtum erant credituri.*[z] So that Calviniſm and Pelagianiſm, though not Arminianiſm, are intentionally condemned in this article: but all intermediate opinions, how to reconcile God's præſcience of a certainty of events with free agency, the unequal vouchſafements of the means of grace, their ſufficiency and efficacy, the cooperations of grace and free-will, are left undetermined, to the evidence of ſcripture, for the exerciſe of every man's ſagacity or faith.

And now, ſir, I apply myſelf to examine your objections in the fifth chapter of the Confeſſional, which are not anſwered or obviated in the above account. You begin with wholeſale abuſe upon all the clergy whoſe opinions you like not, of whom you ſpeak with contempt, as ſtiling themſelves, what they eſteem it their honor and happineſs to be, *the orthodox*; and who upon your own principles, have as much a right to think for themſelves as you have; and therefore have a right to be born with, by the true friends of liberty: but ſuch advocates for liberty, as yourſelf, tolerate no opinions but their own. And what have theſe orthodox done? why *biſhop Burnet was never a favorite with them.*[a] If this be a diſtinguiſhing character of the *orthodox*, you will have a conſiderable title to that appellation yourſelf; for from your frequent groſs reflections

[z] Opera J. Arminii, diſput. XV. p. 283, 284.
[a] Conf. p. 140.

on the biſhop, he certainly appears to have been no favorite of yours. *His Paſtoral care*, you tell us, *created a ſort of offence, which was never to be forgiven.* This charge unhappily wants the circumſtance of truth. You know very well that this book is, and hath long, if not always been, highly and generally eſteemed, even by thoſe who think the biſhop to have carried ſome things too far.

Such was their reſentment,[b] *i. e.* at the Paſtoral Care! Which reſentment appears not. The Paſtoral Care had been publiſhed, I believe, without any mark of reſentment, nine years before the convocation meddled with the Expoſition: *The lower houſe fell upon it* [the Expoſition] *with the utmoſt fury, as a performance full of ſcandal to the church and danger to religion.*[c] Where you learned that this was done with the utmoſt fury, you have not informed us. Burnet himſelf hath only ſaid, that 'they being highly incenſed againſt 'him,' not for his Paſtoral Care, but for his oppoſition to ſome irregular proceedings of theirs, againſt which many of the moſt eminent and learned among them had framed a proteſt, — 'cenſured his Expoſition in three general pro-'poſitions: 1. That it allowed a diverſity of o-'pinions, which the articles were framed to a-'void: 2. that it contained many paſſages con-'trary to the true meaning of the articles, and to 'other received doctrines of our church: 3. that 'ſomethings in it were of dangerous conſequence 'to the church, and derogated from the honor 'of the reformation. But what the particulars 'were to which theſe general heads referred, could 'never be learnt.' Now, on two of theſe heads at leaſt, you have cenſured the biſhop with more fury

[b] Confeſſ. p. 140. [c] Ibid.

fury than the lower houſe of convocation appear to have done: for ſuppoſing *their* charge to be true, he might ſtill be an honeſt man; but *your* charge makes him a knave.

You procede to tell us, that *they were happily reſtrained from proceding to extremities in their corporate capacity.*[d] . . . Had they then reſolved to get him deprived, but were hindered by the interpoſition of the crown? Let us hear his own account of the matter. 'I begged that the 'archbiſhop would diſpenſe with the order made, 'againſt further communication with the lower 'houſe, as to this matter: but they would enter 'into no particulars, unleſs they might at the 'ſame time offer ſome other matters, which the 'biſhops would not admit of.' How could you write in ſo tragical a ſtile, on what was plainly no more than a ſudden act of unjuſt peeviſhneſs, into which hot-headed ſeducers hurried the reſt, but quickly found they could not ſupport their accuſation: and ſo far were wiſer than you have been? And even with reſpect to the author of the prefatory diſcourſe, biſhop Burnet's anſwer ſeems to have prevented his deſigned examination.

The XXXIX *Articles were framed to prevent diverſities of opinions:* and the author of the prefatory diſcourſe, [Dr. Binckes,] *undauntedly appeals to the matter of fact in the following words:* '*To* 'the honor of the compilers of our Articles, *it muſt* 'be acknowledged, *that for the ſevenſcore years laſt* 'paſt, [*i. e.* from 1562 to 1702.] *ſince the pub-* 'lication of them, *they have prevented diverſity of* 'opinion in the church, *to that degree, that* LITTLE 'or NO *diſpute hath hitherto been about the different* 'ſenſes the words may, *in common and unforced con-*

 'ſtruction,

[d] Ibid.

'*ſtruction, be made to bear.*' —— *An aſſertion which bids defiance to all hiſtory.*' Without taking upon myſelf the defence of that treatiſe, which I have never ſeen, I may obſerve in behalf of the articles having obtained the end they profeſſedly aimed at, that the end which they profeſſedly had in view was, TO AVOID DISCORD, which then divided the church, IN CERTAIN ARTICLES OF RELIGION; not *to prevent all diverſities of opinions.* The end by them ſpecified they did in great meaſure obtain; for the diſcord of papiſtical, Arian, and anabaptiſtical errors was certainly much more rooted out of the church, from the time of compiling the articles to the beginning of this century, and I hope is ſo ſtill, than it was before the articles paſſed. This is not bidding defiance to all hiſtory, but proved by it. Neither was it ſaid, that there had been *little or no diſpute* about points determined in the articles; for many bold hereticks would not be reſtrained: but then they were kept out of the pulpits, and thereby the diſcord of diverſity of opinions among the people was in a great meaſure avoided, as was intended by the articles. Nor is it denied that there were *ſome* diſputes among the preachers themſelves; for there have been many daring tranſgreſſors of the laws and oppugners of ſubſcription. And the laws of the ſtate may as well be reproached for not preventing all riots and ſeditions, as the laws of the church for not preventing ſuch factious ſpirits. But to imagine that ſubſcriptions have increaſed diſputes, is much wilder than to imagine they have prevented them intirely; unleſs all men were as perverſe as you are, and then perhaps it might be true.

But

[a] Conſeſſ. p. 141, 142.

But your *aſtoniſhment* at this aſſertion roſe from *the ſudden recollection of* the predeſtinarian controverſy in that interval.[f] Surely your aſtoniſhment might have ſubſided much ſooner, had you recollected that this was no controverſy raiſed by the articles: it roſe long before they were framed, or even Chriſtianity was reveled: it was as old as the diſpute about the origin of evil — A controverſy which you might alſo have recollected that you yourſelf acknowledge, *even if men had been candid, capable, and upright throughout, muſt probably have ariſen at all events.*[g] Why muſt the articles then be deemed uſeleſs in *all* reſpects, becauſe they have not cured a malady, in your own judgement incurable; and which the compilers never dreamed of curing, only attempted to bring men to more moderation, by cautioning againſt the extreme errors on both ſides: in which cautions both ſides agreed, and in leaving men, in moſt of the nice points, to abound in their own ſenſe? Nay, ſir, you ſeem to allow, that notwithſtanding ſuch diſputes, men might be agreed in the doctrine of the articles; for you ſay, *it is a fact in which our hiſtorical writers of all parties agree, that during the reign of Q. Elizabeth, and for ſome part of the reign of King James* I. *there was* NO DIFFERENCE *between the epiſcopal churchmen and the Puritans, in matters of* DOCTRINE.[h] Yet you know that the puritanical interpretation of the IIId and XVIIth Articles was much preſſed and oppoſed in that interval: ſo that when you reconcile your own aſſertions to ſober truth, I may ſuppoſe your aſtoniſhment at Dr. Binckes's will ſubſide.

 However,

[f] Confeſſ. p. 143.
[g] Confeſſ. p. 288. note.
[h] Confeſſ. p. 245.

However, you are very angry with Mr. White, that *he hath, without the leaſt heſitation, to this fourſcore years of peace and reſt, added forty-ſeven more.*[1] Where? You ſtate the caſe with Mr. White thus: *Dr. S. Chandler, ... 1748, had printed the ſpeech of the famous Turretine, ſpoken to the leſſer council of Geneva, June 29, 1706, touching ſubſcription to the* Formula Conſenſus: *the effect of which oration was, that all ſubſcriptions to human formularies were thenceforward aboliſhed by publick authority; a promiſe only being required inſtead thereof, that the perſon to be admitted to the function either of miniſter or profeſſor, would teach nothing, either in the church or academy, contrary to the ſaid* Conſenſus, *or the confeſſion of the Gallican church, for the ſake of peace. This precedent Dr. Chandler failed not to recommend, as a very proper one for the church of England to follow: which provoked the abovementioned Mr. White to make the following reply:* 'Becauſe they, '[the divines of Geneva,] or moſt of them, had 'ſwerved from the doctrines which they were cal-'led to aſſent and ſubſcribe to, and were there-'fore uneaſy till their ſubſcriptions were removed, 'are WE to be called upon to remove ours? WE, 'who have no ſuch trouble and diviſion amongſt 'us, upon the point to be aſſented and ſub-'ſcribed to?' Now, ſir, ſuppoſing Mr. White miſtaken in his aſſertion, what ſyllable hath he uttered about forty-ſeven years of reſt and peace added to ſevenſcore before? Dr. Chandler in 1748 recommended to the church of England to lay aſide ſubſcription, as the divines of Geneva had done. To which it was replied, in 1749, that the church of England had not like cauſe to do it as the divines at Geneva had: WE *have no* SUCH

[1] Confeſſ. p. 144.

SUCH *trouble and diviſion amongſt* US, *upon the points to be aſſented and ſubſcribed to.* Here is not a word about the reſt and peace enjoyed in England for nine ſcore and ſeven years: but only that in 1748 and 1749 we had not the ſame reaſon to lay aſide *our* ſubſcriptions, as the divines at Geneva had in 1706: and in aſſerting this certainly Mr. White was not miſtaken: for Rector Turretine, in his ſpeech, ſaith, 'Every one acknowledges, that the matters referred to [in the Geneva ſubſcription] are not ſufficiently important, nor clearly enough reveled in ſcripture, to impoſe the belief of them.'[k] . . . . . 'Matters, which perſons of all ſides avow to be indifferent, and no ways eſſential to ſalvation.[l] . . . 'We meddle nothing with doctrinal matter, nor with our regulations. They remain in their full force.'[m] 'They are *bagatelles*,[n] ſuch, as it would be in ſome meaſure ſcandalous to ſpeak to the people about them.' Yet, 'to preſerve peace and union, as well as uniformity, in the manner of our inſtruction,[o]' they who offered themſelves for the miniſtry were ſtill to *promiſe that they would preach nothing contrary* to thoſe *uneſſential, unimportant articles, which it was in ſome meaſure ſcandalous to ſpeak to the people about.* Such was the glorious victory over ſubſcriptions at Geneva by Turretine! ſuch the example recommended to the church of England by Dr. Chandler! But we have no ſuch opinion of our XXXIX Articles; *we have no* ſuch *trouble and diviſion amongſt* us, *upon the points to be aſſented and ſubſcribed to.* Thoſe points, not fit to be mentioned to the people, were the deciſions

[k] Chandler's Caſe of ſubſcription, p. 158.
[l] P. 160. [m] P. 162. [n] P. 175.
[o] P. 168.

ciſions at Dort, which you recommend in preference to ours; and which theſe divines at Geneva declined requiring ſubſcription to, leſt 'all 'the prelates of the church of England, who do 'ſo great honor to the reformed intereſt,[q] could 'not be of their church.'

But in good earneſt, could Mr. White be ignorant of the trouble which Dr. Clarke and Mr. Whiſton met with, for their deviations from the ſenſe of the eighth and ſome others of our articles? Had he never heard of the controverſy concerning Arian ſubſcription?[r] I by no means ſuppoſe Mr. White ignorant of theſe things: but I cannot conceive how it ſhould turn out to the honor of you or your friends to put us in mind of them. It was the deſign of K. Edward's and Q. Elizabeth's articles to AVOID DISCORD IN CERTAIN MATTERS OF RELIGION; eſpecially, as we learn from the *Reformatio Legum*, againſt the Arian and Macedonian miſinterpretation of ſcripture, the errors of Pelagians and Anabaptiſts, and the abſurdities and tyranny of popery: and by means of the book of articles, diſcord in theſe points was in a great meaſure avoided in the church, by keeping the maintainers of ſuch hereſies and errors out of the pulpits. This good effect, according to Dr. Binckes, as you inform us, the articles in good meaſure obtained, to the year 1702. At which time Bp. Burnet having reſtored the articles relating to predeſtination to their grammatical ſenſe, from the exceſſes to which Calviniſtical interpreters had wreſted them, ſuffering perſons of different opinions, in points not abſolutely determined in the article, to abound in their own ſenſe: in 1712 the Arians not

[q] Chandler's Caſe of ſubſcription, p. 169.
[r] Confeſſ. p. 147.

not only wreſted the ſcriptures in favor of their creature-worſhip, but the Engliſh ſervice, nay, the very Nicene and Athanaſian creeds, (though framed on purpoſe to condemn them), and the ſeveral articles relating to the Trinity, to this perverted ſenſe. And at this commodious door entered in all thoſe hereticks whoſe doctrines had been condemned in general by the Chriſtian church, from the council of Nice to the Engliſh ſynod in 1552. You aſk, *Where is their expoſition of the articles* [the expoſition of the compilers] *relating to the Trinity, to be met with?* [s] If you mean what authority or aſſurance, beſides the words of the articles, is there that they meant to condemn the Arians and Macedonians? I anſwer, the words are enough; but we have over and above, their expreſs declaration in the Reformatio Legum, tit. De Hæreſibus. Speaking of pernicious errors concerning Chriſt's natures, they ſay, c. 56. 'Among which ſome are of 'the ſect of the Arians, ſo aſſerting his manhood 'as to deny his Divinity; who are to be ſepa-'rated as unſound members from the church; 'as are alſo thoſe who have conſpired with Ma-'cedonius againſt the Holy Ghoſt, not acknow-'ledging him to be God.' [t] Nay, Turretine, who was for aboliſhing the Geneva ſubſcription, reſents the ſuſpicion of intending thereby to *open the door to Arminianiſm, Sociniuniſm, or Deiſm.*[u] For

[s] Confeſſ. p. 184.

[t] Circa duplicem Chriſti naturam, pernicioſus eſt et varius error: ex quibus alii ſunt ex Arianorum ſectâ, Chriſtum ita ponentes hominem, ut Deum negent. Cap. 5. —— Quomodo verò hæc putida membra ſunt ab eccleſiæ corpore ſegreganda, quæ de Chriſto capite tam perverſè ſentiunt; ſic illorum etiam eſt execrabilis impudentia, qui cum Macedonio contra Spiritum ſanctum conſpiraverunt, illum pro Deo non agnoſcentes. Cap. 6.

[u] Caſe of ſubſcription, p. 172.

For although ſubſcription to the decrees of the ſynod of Dort were aboliſhed, there were confeſſions of faith ſufficient for condemning thoſe errors; and inſtances in England, that thoſe decrees might be rejected without introducing Arianiſm. This was about ſix years before Dr. Clarke's project was tried. I am unwilling to believe, yet unable to contradict, what common report ſaith concerning the conſequences of Turretine's ſucceſs at Geneva.

But you ſay, *opening a door for Arminian ſubſcription unwarily let in the Arians at the ſame entrance, who would not be turned out. And indeed, if there is prevarication on one ſide, it cannot be helped; it is the ſame caſe on the other.*[w] It ſtill continues *to be proved*, that what you call Arminianiſm is a prevarication, or perverting the article to a ſenſe not allowed by the compilers. The prevarication of ſubſcribing Arians is notorious, and by you confeſſed; for which *our* prevarication, had it been proved, could have been no excuſe. After coming into the church in ſuch a blameable manner, to aſſume the chair, and call your governors to account for ſetting up theſe bars againſt ſuch of your friends as continue honeſt men and would not treacherouſly break into a ſociety to plunder it, with whoſe terms they chuſe not to comply, is a behaviour ſcarce to be paralleled, except by ſome practices in the firſt Chriſtian churches ſettled by the apoſtles. St. Jude, having exhorted the diſciples that they *ſhould earneſtly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the ſaints*, ſpeaks of *certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, . . . denying the only* Maſter *God and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* —— *Theſe . . . .*

deſpiſed

[w] Confeſſ. p. 192, 193.

deſpiſed dominion, and ſpeak evil of dignities: whom he compares to *raging waves of the ſea, foaming out their own ſhame.*[x] Thus much, ſir, Mr. White might have known of the controverſy concerning Arian ſubſcription. And how much the knowledge turns out to the credit of thoſe who have been concerned in it, the reader will judge; as well as of the juſtice with which you complain of him for excluding you from the appellation of WE and US, which you think can be only becauſe they offend againſt canonical conformity: but the articles are criterion ſufficient. While you ſubſcribe and controvert, you betray yourſelf. There needed no canon to convince obſervers, that all that ſwim down the ſtream together, whatever they claimed to be, are not apples. I eſteem and pity all ſerious and candid perſons, when I think they err in religious matters: and I hope I am duly ſenſible of my own fallibility. But ſuch as write without common fairneſs, mildneſs, or modeſty, ought to have their characters held up to their own view, and that of others. If I have gone too far (as I am very willing to believe I may) in applying to you and your brethren that which the apoſtle hath above drawn, I beg your pardon with more pleaſure than I made the application, and wiſh to have all due abatements made; but intreat you to conſider, how far it fits you.

Mr. White did not think, and I hope had no reaſon to think, the number of thoſe who had occaſion to ſubſcribe the articles, and diſbelieved any of them, near ſo great as you and your friends pretend it. The candid diſquiſitors would have paſſed on the world for numerous and conſiderable and were neither. But were it the caſe of

[x] Jude, ver. 3, 4, 8, 13.

of ever ſo many, muſt we give up every thing to them? Let them ſhew to what they object; and that we ought to part with it as falſe; or need not inſiſt on it, though true; when they have convinced us, we will yield. But why muſt we give up *all* articles, becauſe they diſlike *ſome*, which perhaps we cannot give up? You indeed take a ſhorter way; that all articles of faith, as ſuch, be they ever ſo univerſally acknowledged as true, are unlawful to be propoſed for ſubſcription or aſſent. In which you contradict the judgement of all proteſtant churches, even thoſe whoſe judgements you recommend to us to follow, profeſſor Turretine and your friend at Geneva.

In your note at page 147, after informing us that Mr. White had aſſerted, that every diſſenting miniſter in the kingdom, who had complied with the terms of the toleration, had ſubſcribed the three creeds, you break out into this exclamation, *Good natured ſoul!* Suppoſing him ever ſo greatly miſtaken in this aſſertion, yet what *illnature* could there be in miſtaking a fact? Is there none in your exclamation upon it? Do you not mean to inſinuate, that Mr. White wiſhed they were obliged more effectually to ſubſcribe the articles? And further, by the words ſubjoined, that if eccleſiaſticks were to take the ſubſcription, this would be done? *Good natured ſoul!* But can you produce inſtances to prove, that eccleſiaſticks have endeavoured to procure any moleſtation to diſſenting miniſters on this general neglect of obſerving the conditions of the indulgence granted to them? if not, ſome acknowledgement of their forbearance on this head might be due to them, if any equity could be due to eccleſiaſticks.

There

There is not any ſort of agreement, ſays a ſenſible writer, *in the notions of theſe two eminent defenders of the Trinity, Dr. Waterland and Dr. Bennet.*[y] This ſenſible writer, who I believe is Dr. Sykes, doth not ſay truly, that there is no ſort of agreement between Waterland and Bennet, and the other perſons mentioned in this page. They agreed in a great deal, enough to warrant their ſubſcription, though not in things which the articles do not determine.

To every point of theology, you ſay, *impoſed in theſe articles, I apprehend ſuch agreement was deſigned*;[z] yea, ſo far as it is propoſed in theſe articles, but no further. Had this been attended to, you might have ſpared the following reflection.

No, ſaith the doctor, becauſe the thing is impoſſible.[a] What thing does Dr. Nichols ſay is impoſſible? not, as you repreſent him, agreement in every point of theology propoſed in the articles: but, as he clearly expreſſes himſelf, and as you had juſt before quoted him, *in every point of theology controverted among divines.* This is a groſs, and muſt be a willful miſrepreſentation.

Theſe fathers of the church, you ſay, *might think the thing very poſſible.*[b] They knew, as well as you, ſir, what was poſſible and what was not. And when they tell us their deſign was to avoid diverſities of opinions, common ſenſe dictates, that they meant to avoid them as far as by ſuch means they could, and needed. If an act be made to prevent the profanation of the Lord's day, doth it follow that the makers thought it would prevent *all* profanation of it? Or, if there be ſome afterwards,

[y] Confeſſ. p. 149.
[z] Confeſſ. p. 150.
[a] Ibid.
[b] Ibid.

afterwards, doth it follow that the act is of no uſe?

The compilers themſelves tell us that the deſign of the articles was to avoid diverſities of opinions; Dr. Nichols comes 150 *years after them, and affirms this could not be the deſign of them: which of them is the credible evidence?*[c] We ſhall preſently ſee who is the evidence that deſerves no credit. The compilers profeſt deſign was to avoid diverſities of opinions IN CERTAIN MATTERS OF RELIGION; Dr. Nichols ſays, theſe articles could not be deſigned to oblige all perſons . . . that they ſhould agree IN EVERY POINT OF THEOLOGY WHICH IS CONTROVERTED AMONG DIVINES. This evidence is conſiſtent and true. The forfeiture of credibility as an evidence I fear will fall to your ſhare in the repreſentation.

The doctor is of opinion, that ſome of theſe articles were purpoſely drawn up in general terms[d] [*i. e.* in terms admitting ſeveral ſenſes.] General terms may be terms not admitting ſeveral ſenſes, but one general ſenſe in which perſons may well agree, though they differ about particulars, not expreſſed in ſuch general terms.

Some of theſe articles,—we deſire to know which?[e] The doctor doth not pretend to be in any ſecret concerning this matter, nor was he more bound to tell the author of the Confeſſional, than the author of the Confeſſional to tell him. Every one muſt judge uprightly for himſelf from the words.

Can any one ſay, that all theſe perſons [the firſt compilers or ſubſcribers of the articles] *were agreed in any one point?*[f] Why not? They were agreed in all the points which they determined: they

[c] Confeſſ. p. 151.
[d] Ibid.
[e] Ibid.
[f] Confeſſ. p. 152.

they were agreed againſt prayers in an unknown tongue; againſt tranſubſtantiation; though they might differ about the *preſence:* and ſo in other things, the differences of their ſyſtems did not reach to every point.

How many friends helped Cranmer in compoſing the articles, you do not know, though you ſay there were only *one or two:* nor whether they were all of a mind, though you aſſert, that *without all doubt* they were ſo.[g] But if they were, the mild Cranmer, who knew the minds of others to be in ſeveral things different from his own, would, ſo far as he could without betraying important truths, frame the articles ſo, that perſons of ſuch different opinions might ſubſcribe them with a good conſcience. Both piety and prudence would engage him to this. So that being framed *for* perſons of different opinions, it is much the ſame as if they had been framed *by* ſuch. You procede to inform us that after they were ratified by the king in council, *They were finally introduced into the convocation, not to receive any ſynodical authority there, but to be agreed to by ſubſcription. And let mens private opinions be what they would, when they were given to underſtand, that court favour and church preferment would depend upon their compliance, we may judge in part, from what happens in our own times, that the diſſenters would not be the majority: which yet might poſſibly be the caſe, as it by no means appears, that the firſt ſubſcribers were all, or moſt of them, members of the convocation.*[h] For the truth of the facts aſſerted in this paragraph you refer us to *An hiſtorical and critical hiſtory on the* 39 *articles, Introd.* p. 2, 3. The author, I apprehend, was Anthony Collins. Now inſtead of *only one or two* helping Cranmer

[g] Ibid. [h] Ibid. and note.

in compoſing the articles, he ſays, they were 'agreed upon, and prepared by ſome biſhops, 'and other learned and godly men, to be laid 'before the convocation:' and inſtead of being *finally introduced* into the *convocation*. . . . *to be agreed to by ſubſcription*, he ſays, 'that body' [the convocation] 'were found to be enemies to 'all reformation, and therefore the articles were 'NOT offered to them.' At ſuch variance are your proofs from your aſſertions! I by no means think Collins hath given us a fair and true account of this fact; he was too much biaſſed, as well as yourſelf: but it is abuſing the reader's candor to refer him, for proof of what you affirm, to a book which directly contradicts you. You ſay the articles were ratified by the king, and finally introduced into the convocation, not to receive any ſynodical authority there, but to be agreed to by ſubſcription: and appeal to Collins. Collins ſays, They were not offered to the convocation. Collins indeed ſays, the king did by his own authority require the ſubſcription of the clergy; for which he quotes Strype's Memor. Vol. ii. p. 420: and then boldly infers, 'They may be 'truly ſaid to be the king's alone, as having no 'other legal authority but his.' Yet the ſame Strype, in the ſame volume, p. 368, informs us, that 'while the parliament was ſitting this 'winter (in 1552) a ſynod alſo was held, where-'in was framed and concluded a book of ar-'ticles of religion, taken out of the word of God, 'purified and reformed from the errors of pope-'ry and other ſects:' but that they were not ſigned or ratified by the king till the next year, and by his command publiſhed in May, 1553, and by his authority ordered to be ſubſcribed. So that both

of

of you are contradicted by the very vouchers to which each of you appeal.

You ſay, *Dr. Nicholls was impoſed upon by Peter Heylin, a man loſt to all ſenſe of truth and modeſty, whenever the intereſts or claims of the church came in queſtion.*[i] And doubtleſs he was biaſſed and warm, to a degree, which, notwithſtanding the dreadful provocations that he and his party underwent, was very blameable. But I know not, that he miſrepreſented things deliberately and wilfully: and even if he had, pray, ſir, conſider ſeriouſly how like this character is to your own; whoſe temptations to that ſin have ſurely not been quite ſo great.

Well, ſay you, but *If the compilers made the matter ſo eaſy to men of* ALL SORTS OF OPINIONS—[k] repreſenting this as the ſentiment of Dr. Nicholls. Yet, where hath he ſaid it, or any thing like it? but you cannot write fairly.

Dr. Nicholls ſaith, *men muſt not wiredraw the articles to unreaſonable ſenſes*; you ſay, *you ſee not how this is to be helped.*[l] I am ſorry to ſee that you cannot help doing this, wherever you have a temptation to wiredraw any man's words. But there are upright men, and the doctor here exhorts all men to be ſuch.

He [Dr. Nicholls] *thinks the force of K. James's declaration, did not, nor was deſigned to extend further than his own time.—And that perhaps Bp. Burnet might extend the rule of ſubſcribing (in any literal grammatical ſenſe) he drew from it, too far.*[m] Bp. Burnet doth not draw his rule of interpreting from the king's declaration but repreſents men as acquieſcing in it, becauſe it appeared a reaſonable one.

[i] Confeſſ. p. 153.
[k] Ibid.
[l] Ibid.
[m] Confeſſ. p. 154.

In a long paſſage, quoted at page 155, from Dr. Nicholls, it muſt be confeſſed that the doctor hath not expreſſed himſelf with the utmoſt propriety; yet his meaning was plainly to aſſert that no more particular declaration of belief ariſes from the phraſe *ex animo*, than from the word *willingly*: which is certainly true. A man may *ex animo* ſubſcribe a mere promiſe, which is no declaration of belief: but where the propoſitions ſubſcribed comprehend not only a promiſe, but a declaration of belief, there ſubſcribing them expreſſes a declaration of belief; and expreſſes it equally, whether the phraſe *ex animo* be uſed or not. Now the ſubſcription to the articles in the 36th canon comprehends a declaration that the XXXIX Articles are agreeable to the word of God. And Dr. Nicholls never thought of denying this; for you acknowledge that immediately afterwards he ſays, 'The ſubſcriber ought to aſ-'ſent to each article, taken in a literal and gram-'matical ſenſe.' But he expreſſed himſelf unguardedly; and you take the advantage of it, to miſrepreſent his opinion, as if he thought conſent to the articles ſignified acquieſcence only, and not belief.

Dr. Nicholls, from Grotius, diſtinguiſhes the grammatical ſenſe into *original* and *popular*; *the latter of which only is to be allowed in the interpretation of any law or writing*. On which you obſerve, *it will not* THEREFORE *follow, that ſuch words or expreſſions are to be taken in the ſenſe they* ARE NOW *generally uſed in, becauſe the popular grammatical ſenſe, in which the words* ARE GENERALLY USED NOW, *may not be the ſame popular grammatical ſenſe in which thoſe words were uſed when the law or writing was made.*[n] Careleſs Dr. Nicholls,

[n] Confeſſ. p. 156.

Nicholls, to lay himſelf thus open to his adverſary's thruſt! Sharp-ſighted Mr. Conſeſſionaliſt, to diſcover it! But was it indeed your own diſcovery? No ſuch matter; for this very Dr. Nicholls had made it ready to your hands, and you yourſelf had quoted it but ten lines before. 'The 'expreſſions muſt be taken in the plain common 'ſenſe they *are* generally uſed in, or were uſed in 'at the time of making ſuch law or writing.' You direct the reader to attend to the word *are*, by printing it in Italicks; why did you not wiſh the ſame attention were given to the words, *or were uſed in, at the time of making ſuch law or writing*, and print them in Italicks alſo?—Leſt your diſingenuity ſhould be obvious to the moſt inattentive reader. That there may be two popular grammatical ſenſes of the ſame expreſſion, both the doctor and you agree; and that the original ſenſe of a word, or ſuch popular ſenſe of it (if it has had two) is not to be taken for the intended one, if it be different from that which was the popular one, when the writing to be aſſented to was drawn: only let it be obſerved, that if the word be taken from an older inſtrument framed when the original, or another popular ſenſe of that word was in uſe, an ambiguity will ariſe and if no circumſtances will aſcertain the ſenſe, ſuch ambiguity muſt continue.

To Dr. Nicholls ſaying, that 'there can be 'no doubt made, but that by *publick authority* '(in the XXIIId article) the compilers meant the 'authority of the biſhops,' you object, *what ſhall we ſay of thoſe compilers who* PERHAPS, *and of thoſe firſt ſubſcribers who* CERTAINLY, *were wedded to Calvin's form of church diſcipline? Can any one ſay, that they held no opinion* diverſe *from this*

interpretation?[a] Dr. Nicholls plainly means, what is the plain truth, that no ordination of any perſon, performed *in* this nation, other than by the lawful authority of this nation (which appropiates ordination to biſhops) is to be deemed, according to our articles, a lawful appointment *here*. For he ſaith, that neither by the laws of the church, nor of the realm, any authority is granted to any but biſhops to ordain. This muſt mean *our own* church and realm; of others he ſaith nothing: nor doth the article. In this article is an inſtance of a *general* grammatical ſenſe, without different meanings; which two things you are perpetually confounding. Perſons may ſubſcribe this article in perfectly the ſame ſenſe, yet differ in opinion, in whom the authority ought to reſide.

You miſrepreſent 13 Eliz. cap. 12. which doth not ſay, as you pretend, that *every* clergyman ordained otherwiſe, than by Edw. the ſixth's form, ſhould, on ſubſcribing before Chriſtmas, be qualified to enjoy a benefice: but that *no* clergyman, ordained otherwiſe, ſhould, without ſubſcribing, be qualified. It is intitled an act for miniſters of the church to be of ſound religion. Thoſe who were ordained by the form of Edw. the ſixth were ſufficiently underſtood to be ſo: all ordained otherwiſe, are deprived by this act, unleſs they ſubſcribe. But which of thoſe, who were otherwiſe ordained, were qualified to hold benefices, if they did ſubſcribe, the act doth not ſay. Thoſe who were ordained according to the Popiſh form, during its being legal, doubtleſs were. Whether thoſe ordained by foreign proteſtants, where neceſſity, not choice, made it impoſſible to have epiſcopal ordination, were, this act doth not ſay. And ſuppoſing the firſt paragraph of 13. Eliz. cap. 12. be underſtood

[a] Confeſſ. p. 160.

underſtood to indulge ſuch till the Chriſtmas following, upon ſubſcribing, and after that period to refuſe them: On this ſuppoſition, the rejection being perpetual, and the indulgence only for a ſhort term, the act is rather againſt the foreign proteſtant ordination, as not valid in this church.

But you ſeem to think Cranmer's friendly correſpondence which he held with the founders of proteſtant churches abroad,[p] will prove that he allowed their ordinations to be valid, which yet were not epiſcopal. He allowed and honored ſuch paſtors in their reſpective diſtricts, where neceſſity not choice compelled them to be content with ſuch appointments to the miniſtry. But the allowance was not equal, where epiſcopal ordination could be had. Even Laud held a friendly correſpondence with the foreign proteſtant churches as well as Cranmer: ſee his letter in 1639 to the Swiſs divines in the *Præſtantium virorum Epiſtolæ*, Ep. 552. where they are called by him *Confratres mei chariſſimi:* and of their letter to them he ſaith, 'it was agreeable to him 'on a double account, as it was theirs, and ex-'horting to Chriſtian peace. Such men ought 'they to be who are members of the ſame body, and 'who believe and profeſs the communion of ſaints.'[q] And in 1629 he writes to Voſſius with great mildneſs and concern for the whole reformed church, and for peace among divines, in Ep. 471. And he ſaith to him in 1633, 'It is a mere invention 'that the Engliſh biſhops deſired to extend

 'their

[p] Confeſſ. p. 161.

[q] Gratæ certè mihi fuere duplici nomine, ſcilicet quod veſtræ, et quod Chriſtianæ pacis ſuaſoriæ. Tales enim decent ejuſdem corporis membra, eoſque qui communionem ſanctorum et credunt et profitentur.

'their jurisdiction over the foreign protestant 'churches: a thing which they never so much as 'dreamed of.' Ep. 528.' This may serve both to restrain the force of your argument drawn from Cranmer's friendly correspondence with foreign Protestants, as if it proved that he thought their ordinations as valid in England as the episcopal: and at the same time do some justice to Laud's character, whom, towards the close of this chapter, you treat with very unjust virulence. He was certainly (as I have observed already, in my remarks on your Preface, page 46.) of a vehement temper, and hurried away by it, and by wrong judgement, and partly by provocation also, into severities, utterly unjustifiable: but he meant to do what was right, when he did otherwise; and imagined himself cooler than he was. And we ought to make allowances for one another's faults, and especially warm men for those of warm men, and above all in hot times: and that in which he lived was a fiery time on all sides.

But to return to the XXIIId Article: you say, *The great founders and supporters of other protestant churches abroad . . . had the misfortune (if it is one) to think there might be a lawful call to the ministry without a prelacy.*' Sir, those founders thought it a misfortune that they *could not* have episcopal ordination: but they thought *that necessity* was both an excuse and a law to authorize theirs. Now, where such necessity ceased, the law that authorized them ceased also. In proof of what is here asserted, Luther professes that

[1] Merum figmentum est episcopos Angliæ jurisdictionem suam in ecclesias vestras velle extendere. Id quidem illis ne per somnium accidit.

[2] Confess. p. 261.

that if the [popiſh] biſhops would ceaſe to perſecute the goſpel, . . . 'we would acknowledge 'them as our fathers, and willingly obey their 'authority, *which we find ſupported by the word of 'God.*'[t] Melancthon lays 'the blame on the 'cruelty of the [popiſh] biſhops, that that ca-'nonical polity was deſtroyed *which*, ſaith he, *we ſo 'earneſtly deſired to preſerve:* and bids the papiſts 'conſider what account they will render to God 'for thus ſcattering his church.'[u] And Heerbrand, chancellor of Tubingen in Germany, ſays 'it had been a very ſalutary thing if every pro-'vince could have had its biſhops, and they their 'Metropolitan.'[w] If we turn our eyes from the Lutherans to the *reformed*, (as they call themſelves in diſtinction from the Lutherans,) we ſhall find the like favorable judgement, in preference of epiſcopacy, prevaling among them. Their great leader, Calvin, having acknowledged that biſhops were of apoſtolical inſtitution, adds, that 'arch-'biſhops and patriarchs were afterwards appoint-'ed, for the preſervation of diſcipline —— That 'the government ſo ordered was by ſome called 'an

[t] Pontifices et epiſcopi deſinant evangelium perſequi . . . agnoſcemus eos tanquam parentes noſtros, et parebimus libenter ipſorum autoritati, *quam verbo Dei videmus communitam.* —— Luth. Comment. in Hoſeam. Vid. Seckendorf. lib. iii. ſect. 32. §. cxxvii. p. 584.

[u] Ita ſævitia epiſcoporum in cauſâ eſt, quare alicubi diſſolvitur illa canonica politia, *quam nos magnoperè cupiebamus conſervare.* Ipſi viderint, quomodo rationem Deo reddituri ſint, quod diſſipant eccleſiam. Apolog. Auguſtanæ Confeſſ. art. 7. p. 204. The ſame writer witneſſes in a letter to Camerarius. Inter omnes theologos in conventu Smalcaldico, an. 1540, congregatos conveniſſe, ut epiſcopis redderetur ſua juriſdictio, ſi piam doctrinam amplecti et manifeſta eccleſiæ vitia tollere vellent. Ep. 222. lib. 4.

[w] Saluberrimum eſſet, ſi ſingulæ provinciæ ſuos haberent epiſcopos, et hi archiepiſcopum. In compendio theologiæ, p. 730.

'an *hierarchy*: but he thinks improperly; . . . 'for if we conſider the thing itſelf, and not the 'name, we ſhall find thoſe old biſhops meant not 'to frame any plan of governing the church which 'was different from that which God preſcribed 'in his word.' [x] In his *Neceſſity for reforming the Church*, he declares, 'Let them give us ſuch an 'hierarchy, in which biſhops may be ſo above 'the reſt, as they refuſe not to be under Chriſt, 'and depend upon him as their only Head; that 'they maintain a brotherly ſociety, &c. If 'there be any that do not behave themſelves 'with all reverence and obedience towards them, 'there is no anathema, but I confeſs them wor-'thy of it.' [y] And in 1549, he, Bullinger, and other learned foreign proteſtants, in a letter to K. Edward VI. offered to make him their defender, and to have biſhops in their churches, for better unity and concord among them.[z] And when this ſcheme was diſappointed by the intrigues of the court of Rome, he again made a ſerious motion to Parker, after Q. Elizabeth's acceſſion, 'of uniting Proteſtants together, by eſ-'tabliſhing a ſet form and method, (*i. e.* ſays 'Strype, of publick ſervice and government of 'the church) not only within her dominions, 'but alſo among all the reformed and evangelick 'churches

[x] Quòd autem ſingulæ provinciæ unum habebant inter epiſcopos archiepiſcopum: quod item in Nicenâ ſynodo conſtituti ſunt patriarchæ, qui eſſent ordine et dignitate archiepiſcopis ſuperiores, id ad diſciplinæ conſervationem pertinebat. —— Gubernationem ſic conſtitutam nonnulli hierarchiam vocarunt, nomine (ut mihi videtur) improprio. —— Verùm ſi rem, omiſſo vocabulo, intuemur, reperiemus veteres epiſcopos non aliam regendæ eccleſiæ formam voluiſſe fingere ab eâ quam Deus verbo ſuo præſcripſit. Inſtit. lib. iv. cap. iv. §. 4.

[y] Strype's life of Parker, p. 70.

[z] Life of Cranmer, b. ii. c. 15.

'churches abroad.'[a] The queen ordered her thanks to be returned to Calvin; but while Parker was buſied in framing a proper method, Calvin died. In the French church Spanheim witneſſes, 'Nec obſcuri ſunt in Galliâ ipsâ reformatâ illi theologi, *quorum ſi votis fuiſſet locus*, nec interceſſiſſent *obices removeri neſcii*, accepiſſent plerique formam epiſcopalis diſciplinæ. . . . . Citareque hanc in rem Caſaubonos, Camerones, Diodatos, Bochartos, Langlæos, ac vivos etiam teſtes, proclive fore.'[b] Many more may be ſeen in Durel, from whom I have before quoted one, in my Firſt Letter, page 49, 58. and in Entretiens ſur la Correſpondence fraternelle de l'Egliſe Anglicane avec les autres Egliſes Reformées, Amſt. 1707. Even the ſynod of Dort, by their preſident Bogerman, expreſſed their approbation of the church of England, and of epiſcopacy, which they were deſirous to eſtabliſh in their churches, but the times would not then permit them to make this change; complaining of their want of it as a misfortune: *Nobis non licet eſſe tam beatis.* And Le Clerc, with whom you agree, in your note at page 33, in approving apoſtolical Chriſtianity, ſays, he profeſſes his belief to be, that epiſcopacy is of apoſtolical inſtitution, and that none have a right to depart from it, unleſs in caſes where the corruptions of the church cannot be remedied without it: and that thoſe, who live in proteſtant countries where they have biſhops, as in England, are greatly to blame 'to ſeparate themſelves from 'them; and more ſo, if they endeavour to over-

'throw

[a] Life of Parker, p. 69.
[b] Opera Spanh. t. iii. f. 1017.

'throw epiſcopacy in order to introduce preſbytery, 'fanaticiſm or anarchy.'[c]

Your next attack is upon Dr. Bennet: with his explications of the particular articles, which you mention, I am not concerned, and ſhall not meddle with them. But I muſt obſerve, that when you charge him with giving, in 1714, his young ſtudent *to underſtand that he muſt ſubſcribe the articles in thoſe very ſenſes in which he explaned them, excluſive of all others*; you write with your uſual unfairneſs. He doth no more than lay down his own opinion with his reaſons, not arrogating to himſelf in the text, what you ironically aſcribe to him *a peculiarly intimate acquaintance with the ſenſe of the obſcureſt articles:* and leaves his young ſtudent to judge how far he is in the right. You go on to ſay, that in the very next year, 1715, the doctor affirms, 'the *church does* 'not *reſtrain us to the belief of any one article or* 'propoſition, *in any particular ſenſe, further than* 'we are *reſtrained by the words themſelves.* When 'an article or propoſition, ſaith the doctor, *is* 'fairly *capable of two different ſenſes, I would fain* 'know *who hath power to determine which is the church's*

[c] J'ai toujours fait profeſſion de croire, que le gouvernement épiſcopal eſt d'inſtitution apoſtolique, et par conſéquent très bon et très légitime, qu'on n'a eu aucun droit de le changer en aucun lieu, à-moins qu'il ne fut pas poſſible de reformer autrement les abus qui s'étoient gliſſés dans le Chriſtianiſme, comme on ſait qu'il eſt arrivé en France, dans les Provinces-Unis, en Suiſſe, et ailleurs, où l'on fût obligé de changer le gouvernement établi, par ce qu'on n'en pouvoit obtenir aucune reformation, que d'ailleurs on a dû le conſerver en Angleterre, où la reformation s'eſt pû faire ſans le changer; qu'ainſi les Proteſtans, qui ſe trouvent en Angleterre, ou en d'autres lieux, où il y a des évêques, ſont très mal de s'en ſeparer, que ce ſeroit encore plus mal fait que de eſſayer de la détruire pour établir le preſbyterianiſme, ou le fanatiſme, ou l'anarchie. Biblioth. Choiſ. tom. xx. p. 399.

church's ſenſe?" Bennet's Eſſay ch. 35. On this you remark, what you muſt know to be falſe, that *when the doctor wrote his* directions, *he thought he himſelf had this power*; and you imagine he thought ſo, *upon the ſuppoſition*, which if he made, he muſt be ſenſible could not warrant him in thinking ſo, *that the church had left no article or propoſition capable of two different ſenſes.* Then you proceed, *if indeed ſuch articles . . . are left ambiguous . . on ſet purpoſe, I do not know who has any power to determine that the church, in ſuch articles and propoſitions, had any ſenſe at all.*[a] The true ſtate of the whole matter is this; when the doctor wrote his *Directions*, he never thought, either that no article was capable of two different ſenſes; or that he had power to determine which of two different ſenſes, of which any article was *fairly capable*, was the church's ſenſe. By *fairly capable* he muſt mean, comprehending two different ſenſes *agreeable to ſcripture*; for ſo the articles themſelves and our ſubſcription require them to be. The doctor mentions ſeveral articles which have been explaned in different ſenſes; he tells us in which of thoſe ſenſes *he* has ſubſcribed, and aſſigns *his* reaſons: but expreſsly allows thoſe who *can* ſubſcribe in another ſenſe, that is, who think they can prove the words *fairly capable* of another ſenſe *agreeable to ſcripture*, to ſubſcribe in that ſenſe. And ſurely, in ſuch a caſe, the church cannot be ſaid not to have *any* ſenſe becauſe it admits of *two*. So that the doctor's *Directions* and *Eſſay* agree very well together on this head: as do alſo the 33d and 35th chapters of his *Eſſay*. In his 33d indeed he thinks (whether he be miſtaken, or not, affects not the argument) no article is *fairly capable* of more than one ſenſe; but, *if*

[a] Confeſſ. p. 166, 167.

if such there be, in ch. 35. he knows not who has power to determine which is the church's sense.

You adorn you second edition, at page 169, with a very curious note, in which you censure all the judges in England, for determining that the statute of 13. Eliz. requires an absolute subscription to the articles, and not a conditional or limited one, *so far forth as the same were agreeable to the word of God:* and you ask, *where could be the harm or impropriety of allowing protestant ministers to subscribe to human forms with this condition?* I answer, that such a subscription would evidently be unmeaning and trifling; for they might, with the same condition understood, just as well subscribe to a chapter in the Koran, or the decrees of Trent. But you ask, *does the law then require subscription* exclusive *of this condition? namely, whether these articles are agreeable to the word of God, or not?* Certainly, by no means. But can you see no other sense of this plain proposition 'The articles are agreeable to the word of God,' than one of these two, They are agreeable to it so far as they are agreeable to it, or, They are agreeable to it whether they are agreeable to it or not? Yet you say that the opinion of the judges *takes it for granted, that the church is infallible*; for if a person *conforms without examination, he hath no other way of justifying himself than by the presumption that the church cannot err.* But the plain truth is, that no one is required by this act to conform or subscribe without examination, or to conform or subscribe at all. It only appoints, that no one shall enjoy such and such offices unless he subscribes: if he cannot, upon examination, subscribe with a good conscience, he is at full liberty to let it alone. If he can, there is no objection

jection againſt his doing it, be the church in which he officiates ever ſo fallible. But you cannot forbear ſpeaking of perſons as *obliged* to ſubſcribe, though you know the contrary.

You cenſure Dr. Bennet for ſaying, *though we ſubſcribe to the* 35th *article, we do not ſubſcribe to the homilies.*[e] Perhaps the diſtinction is more ſubtle than needful. But though we may be ſuppoſed to ſubſcribe both, yet certainly we ſubſcribe them to different effect; to the articles, that they are *agreeable to God's word:* to the homilies, that they *contain a godly and wholeſome doctrine, and neceſſary for thoſe times.* Accordingly, you obſerve that Dr. Burnet holds, that our ſubſcription to the homilies rather relates to the main importance and deſign of them, than to every paſſage in them. On which you make this remark, *It is not improbable that his Lordſhip had ſome objection (as well he might) to ſome paſſages in the homilies againſt wilful rebellion.*[f] I know not what probabilities you may have to think ſo: but this I know, that Bp. Burnet, after Lord Ruſſel's affair, and the revolution, thought the general doctrine of non-reſiſtance and quiet ſubmiſſion to our governours, taught in thoſe homilies, was *a godly and wholeſome doctrine*; for he tells us, in a ſermon preached at Guildhall, 1689, that our church injoins 'an intire obe-'dience to all the lawful commands of authority, 'and an abſolute ſubmiſſion to that ſupreme 'power God hath put in our ſovereign's hands. 'This doctrine, ſays he, we juſtly glory in; 'and if any who have had their baptiſm and edu-'cation in our church, have turned renegades 'from this, they proved no leſs enemies to the 'church herſelf, than to the civil authority.'

But

[e] Confeſſ. p. 172. [f] Confeſſ. p. 173.

But although his lordſhip *had* no objection to the homily againſt *wilful rebellion*, yet you think *he well might*. It is poſſible, ſir, that your ideas of liberty may lead into an illegal and unconſtitutional licentiouſneſs; for thoſe celebrated defenders of the people's liberty, the managers for the houſe of commons againſt Dr. Sacheverel, allow the doctrine of non-reſiſtance, the doctrine of the church of England, *as ſtated in her homilies*, or elſewhere delivered; by which the general duty of ſubjects to the higher power is taught to be UNQUESTIONABLY, A GODLY AND WHOLESOME DOCTRINE.[g] So that they thought the doctrine not only *neceſſary for thoſe times*, but alſo *wholeſome at all times*, that men be cautioned againſt 'the principal and moſt uſual cauſes of rebellion, 'eſpecially ambition and ignorance. By ambiti-'tion (ſays the compiler of the homily) I mean 'the unlawful and reſtleſs deſire in men, to be 'of higher eſtate than God hath given or appoint-'ed to them. By ignorance, I mean no unſkilful-'neſs in arts and ſciences, but the lack of know-'ledge of God's bleſſed will declared in his holy 'word, which teacheth both extremely to abhor all 'rebellion, as being the root of all miſchief: and 'eſpecially to delight in obedience, as the be-'ginning and foundation of all goodneſs.'[h]

However, you applaud *the late excellent biſhop Hoadly*, for his *ſevere but juſt reproof of the high-church clergy*, on their approving by their ſubſcriptions the doctrine of the homilies, while yet they differed from it, in the Calviniſtical points, and others.[i] At the ſame time you well know, that *the late excellent Bp. Hoadly* ſeveral times made

[g] Mr. Litchmere's ſpeech, p. 278.
[h] Fifth part of the Sermon againſt wilful rebellion.
[i] Conſeſſ. p. 176, 177.

made the ſame ſubſcription to their doctrine that other clergymen do; and yet that perhaps no clergyman of that age differed more from them, both in thoſe points and many beſides, than he did. What right then had HE to reprove THEM, or have YOU to extol HIM in this particular? unleſs you know of ſome diſpenſing power that may occaſionally be granted to favorites.

Laſtly, Dr. Waterland having *ex profeſſo* cenſured Arian and approved Arminian ſubſcription, hath thereby incurred your high reſentment. He profeſſes, you ſay, *to ſet out where Dr. Stebbing and Dr. Rogers end*; and that they end *in confirming our church in her power of requiring ſubſcription to her own ſenſe of holy ſcripture.*[k] But they confirm this only in relation to perſons who are to be admitted miniſters, and they agree very well with one another, and with him.

The firſt offence you take at the doctor is, his making the intention of the impoſers one mean of knowing the ſenſe of the article: to which you object: *By the impoſers, I apprehend, muſt be meant the miniſterial impoſers, that is, the biſhops, they being the perſons appointed by law to take the ſecurity of a ſubſcription, on behalf of the church.* And then you procede to urge againſt him the opinion of the author of *The caſe of ſubſcription to the* XXXIX *Articles*, that 'the archbiſhops and 'biſhops, or even the legiſlature itſelf, (without 'a new declaratory law,) cannot determine what 'ſhall be the ſenſe of the doctrines of the articles.' *In this*, ſay you, *the doctor found himſelf obliged to acquieſce.*[l] I ſhould rather imagine, that by *the impoſers* Dr. Waterland could not mean the biſhops, as perſons appointed by law to take this ſecurity of ſubſcription on behalf of the church. 1. Be-

 cauſe

[k] Confeſſ. p. 179.

[l] Confeſſ. p. 179, 180.

cauſe they cannot determine the ſenſe of the articles. 2. Neither are they the impoſers, even miniſterially; for, according to Watſon, (chap. 15.) 'the ordinary (or biſhop) is not bound to 'offer the articles to the clerk, to be by him ſub-'ſcribed, and to require him to do it: but the 'clerk is himſelf to offer to ſubſcribe them.' 3. Dr. Waterland explanes his own meaning, ſaying, 'By *impoſers* I underſtand the governours 'in church and ſtate for the time being.' Caſe of Arian ſubſcription, p. 11. That is, in 1552, King Edward VI. and the convocation: in 1562, Queen Elizabeth and the convocation: in 1571, Queen Elizabeth, the parliament, and the convocation. 4. Neither do I find that any of the doctor's arguments imply, that, ſhould you, ſir, hereafter be made a biſhop, and ſhould require ſubſcription from a clerk, that he might ſubſcribe the articles in an Arian ſenſe, becauſe he knew his miniſterial impoſer interpreted the articles in that ſenſe.

You procede in this miſtake, and go on to impoſe upon the reader, all through your arguments on this point: thus when the doctor ſaid, 'The ſenſe of the compilers and impoſers, where 'certainly known, muſt be religiouſly obſerved;' you ſay, *the ſenſe of the impoſers may be* ALWAYS *certainly known, whatever the ſenſe of the compilers may be*; and inſtance in the deſcent into hell, that the article *is* NOW *univerſally underſtood in a ſenſe probably different from what the compilers of the creed intended.*[m] Dr. Waterland meant by impoſers, the legal ones, the ſovereign, parliament, and convocation: you mean the biſhops for the time being, who indeed are no impoſers at all, not even miniſterially; for they do not *impoſe*, but

[m] Confeſſ. p. 181.

but *atteſt*, the ſubſcription. And the ſenſe of the original compilers muſt be preſumed to be the ſenſe of the impoſers, where the contrary does not appear. It does indeed appear in the article of the deſcent into hell; and it may be inferred, that the original compilers in 1552 interpreted in a more rigid ſenſe the oppoſition of a man *who of malice and ſtubbornneſs of mind doth rail upon the truth of God's word manifeſtly perceived, and being enemy thereunto perſecuteth the ſame*, than the impoſers in 1562 and 1571 did; the compilers ſuppoſing ſuch oppoſition to be *blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt*, and unpardonable, in their XVIth Article; which the impoſers under Q. Elizabeth, with more prudence, as well as charity, omitted. But whenever the ſenſe of the compilers and impoſers differs, that of the impoſers muſt be taken; for mere compilers, as ſuch, have no authority. Where the ſenſe of the compilers and impoſers is the ſame, it moſt evidently ought to be followed. And it ought to be preſumed that they are the ſame, unleſs the contrary appears.

But Dr. Waterland hath happened to ſay, *except in ſome very rare and particular caſes*.[n] The doctor did not mean, that theſe caſes might be excepted at pleaſure, without any ground for it, but on good evidence. You aſk, how any perſons *came by this authority?* The anſwer is, from the nature and reaſon of the thing. You aſk alſo why ſuch liberty *may not be taken upon equally good grounds, in caſes neither rare nor particular?* The anſwer is, becauſe there are not equally good grounds to make theſe exceptions in many caſes as to make them in a few: and the reaſon of making them in any, is not that the caſes are rare

[n] Confeſſ. p. 182.

and particular, but that they carry their own proof along with them, that they ought to be made.

Dr. Waterland ſays truely, that *the ſenſe of the articles relating to the Trinity is fixed by the plain ſignification of the words, and the known intent of the compilers and impoſers.* And you may put it to the conſcience of any honeſt man, whether it is not by all theſe ways ſo expreſſed as to be utterly inconſiſtent with the Arian and Socinian ſchemes. But he ſays as truely, concerning the damnatory clauſes, that the compilers ſenſe of them being doubtful, and the impoſers not having explaned them, they may be underſtood in ſuch ſenſe as the words will bear, and as is moſt agreeable to ſcripture and reaſon. Now, in all opinions, on which a ſentence of condemnation is paſſed, the caſe of invincible ignorance, and penitence, is always tacitly, though not expreſsly, excepted; and our Saviour's own words, *He that believeth not ſhall be damned*, authorize the exception. No one underſtanding them to relate to ſuch as have not had ſufficient means of belief: for, *How*, ſaith St. Paul, *ſhall they believe on him of whom they have not heard?*

It is an unfair advantage that you would take from the wrong ſenſe which you have given to the word *impoſers*, that you thence aſſert, *the meaning of the impoſers may* ALWAYS be known. With reſpect to *legal* impoſers this is utterly falſe, all of them having been long ſince dead, without leaving other marks of their meaning behind them, than ſuch as ariſe from the uſual ſenſe of the words: and with reſpect to the biſhop or ordinary, the knowledge of his meaning is no proof of the meaning of the impoſers.

Speaking

Speaking of the compiler of the Athanasian creed, you say, *It is reasonable to suppose that a warm dogmatical man, heated by opposition, who was presumptuous enough to lay down points of artificial theology as articles of faith, without any support from scripture, might have the assurance to consign all men to damnation, who did not believe his doctrines; having probably no other way to procure them to be received.*[o] But, being sensible from what Dr. Waterland had said, that it was not rational to suppose, that the composer of that creed was so presumptuous, or that consigning men to damnation was the way to procure the belief of doctrines which were not believed before, you only answer, *Be it so:*[p] which is giving up your assertion at the same time that you let it stand.

You say, in opposition to Dr. Waterland, that *if Arminians and Calvinists both subscribe the* XVIIth *article, and each in his own sense, they must give it two inconsistent and contradictory senses.*[q] But, indeed, their sense of that article may be just the same, though their opinion concerning the subject of the article may, in respect of matters not expressed in the article, be very different: and it is not expressed in the article, whether predestination be conditional or unconditional. And therefore Dr. Waterland hath justly observed, that both may subscribe to the same proposition in the same sense, though they differ in particulars relating to it, but not contained in it; which is not differing, AT LEAST IT NEED NOT BE, about the sense of the article. The words, which you have put in capitals to raise the attention of your readers, well deserve your own, as they contain the

[o] Confess. p. 185. [p] Confess. p. 186.
[q] Confess. p. 189.

ſolution of your objection: for your aſſertion, that the Calviniſt hath no idea of predeſtination which is not *abſolute*, is evidently a falſe one; though he thinks the *divine* predeſtination is abſolute.

You ſay, indeed, that *no ſtronger word can be deviſed for the ſtate of a man conſigned to an inevitable lot, excluſive of all conditions, than* predeſtination.[r] But indeed *predeſtination* doth not exclude conditions, unleſs the word *unconditional*, or one of like import, be added to it. You ſay further, that *divine decrees controulable by contingent conditions* (you ſhould have ſaid, *dependent* on ſuch conditions) *are contradictory, and differ nothing from human decrees.*[s] But evidently they differ as much as divine and human do: and as men often make conditional decrees, without the leaſt contradiction or abſurdity, ſurely God may.

You affirm, that according to Dr. Waterland's ſcheme of ſubſcribing articles in the ſame ſenſe, *he and the Arians ſubſcribed in the ſame general ſenſe.*[t] It were to be wiſhed you had ſpecified in plain terms what that general ſenſe is; for the ſmall attempt, which you have made toward it in the following page, is to me abſolutely unintelligible.

You do not allow that there is any criterion by which it appears that the Arians were more intended to be condemned by the articles on the Trinity, than the Arminians, or *conditionate decrees*, by the XVIIth.[u] But the *Reformatio Legum*, as already obſerved, determines that the Arians, who denied Chriſt in his better nature to be God eternal and equal with the Father, were to

[r] P. 192.
[s] Ibid.
[t] P. 191.
[u] Confeſſ. p. 188—192.

to be ſeparated from the church as unſound members: and that men ſhould frame their lives according to God's laws in ſcripture, where promiſes are made to the good, and threatenings to the wicked; and to reſt in that will of God which we ſee reveled in ſcripture. Not denying the unchangeable decrees of predeſtination, but certainly not condemning thoſe who believe the conditionate decrees of God's reveled will. So no door is fraudulently opened to thoſe, whom you call Arminians, to the office of preaching, which the articles have not invited them to enter at: no door is attempted to be ſhut againſt the Arians, which the articles did not deſignedly bar againſt them.

You conclude this point with the following words, which I wiſh you well to weigh: *The truth of the caſe is, juſt as the biſhop of Briſtol* (Dr. Coneybeare) *hath ſtated it, in his noted ſermon on ſubſcription:* 'Every one who ſubſcribes 'the articles of religion, does thereby engage, 'not only not to diſpute or contradict them; but 'his ſubſcription amounts to an approbation of, 'and aſſent to, the truth of the doctrines therein 'contained, in the very ſenſe (in) which the 'compilers [and impoſers] are ſuppoſed to have 'underſtood them.'[w] I have added [*and impoſers,*] becauſe it is certain that the impoſers in 1562, and 1571, have not bound upon the ſubſcriber ſome doctrines, of which the compilers in 1552 were perſuaded.

Foreſeeing that it might be objected, that this fixing and obtruding her own interpretations of ſcripture upon her ſons, is rather more than a proteſtant church ought to pretend to, they have prepared an anſwer, as you tell us: *Here, ſay they, is no in-*

 quiſition,

[w] Confeſſ. p. 195.

quiſition, no compulſion, in the caſe. The church of England compels no man to ſubſcribe: they may let it alone if they pleaſe.[x] And is not this anſwer a true one? The church of England obtrudes her interpretation of ſcripture on no one: to give her own interpretation of it, in oppoſition to what ſhe judges *error*, is the very eſſence of proteſtantiſm, and what every proteſtant church hath done. So far is it from being more than they can pretend to, that they would not be Proteſtants without doing it; and had they not done it, there would not have been one proteſtant church in the world. But none are compelled to be of their church, much leſs to be inſtructors in it. And it is ſhameful in you to ſpeak ſo often throughout your book of ſubſcription as *compelled*, when you are forced to own it is *not* compelled. Much more ſhameful, if poſſible, is your ſaying, that *if a man gives it as his reaſon for not ſubſcribing the articles, that he does not believe them to be agreeable to the word of God, the church lays her hands on him with a vengeance, he incurs excommunication, is deprived of the communion, and, if his conſcience ſhould not become more tractable within forty days, he may be committed to priſon, where he muſt lie and rot till he recants.*[y] Here, to ſupport a falſe charge, you ſet forth, as a fact, a proceſs, of which you know you cannot give one ſingle inſtance. But you have learned from the Papiſts to quote obſolete laws, in order to raiſe an odium againſt our church, inſtead of acknowledging in it that Chriſtian ſpirit which forbears, (and I dare ſay you are ſatisfied ever will forbear,) putting them in execution. The conditions are not *new*; they have been known theſe 200 years. If you think *all ſubſcription* unlawful,

[x] Confeſſ. p. 174. [y] Confeſſ. p. 195.

unlawful, why would you caſt yourſelf into a track of life, in which you knew beforehand you could make no progreſs without ſubſcribing? If you have been unwarily caſt into it, but find the conditions, which will be required, are ſuch as you cannot comply with, why will you perſiſt in aſking to be admitted a teacher of doctrines which you are determined to oppoſe? or why ſollicit for emoluments to which you are reſolved not to intitle yourſelf? If with too implicit a faith you have already ſubſcribed, but find cauſe afterward to diſſent, examine whether the point you object to be indifferent, and merely of outward diſcipline; or one in which you judge the ſalvation of your hearers concerned. In the firſt caſe, ſubmiſſion would not be only innocent, but a duty; in the latter, all loſſes, even of life itſelf, muſt be riſqued, rather than comply. But in our church the penalty, by ſtatute 13 Eliz. is only deprivation of his eccleſiaſtical promotions, excluding him from an office, and its reward annexed, which he refuſes to diſcharge. The canon referred to is in great meaſure reſtrained by 1 Wm. and Mary; and the excommunication *ipſo facto*, notwithſtanding what you quote from Lyndwood, can have no effect without a declaratory ſentence.

You ſay, *that the church of England is at all out of conceit with any part, either of her doctrine or diſcipline, does by no means appear by ſome late publick indications of her judgement herein:* referring to the convocation's addreſs 1754, where it is hinted, that the church of England *hath no equal.*[z] And is it any crime, that the clergy of the church of England approve of the doctrine and diſcipline to which they have ſubſcribed?

And

[z] Confeſſ. p. 196. and note,

And if it does not appear that they are out of conceit with them, I ſhould hope they would not be charged as prevaricators, as if they ſubſcribed what they did not approve of. When you, who have ſubſcribed both, are not aſhamed ſo openly to cenſure both, I hope the more conſiſtent clergy will not be aſhamed to give the moſt publick indications, that their judgement agrees with their profeſſions. And that we may not appear too partial to ourſelves, let us refer the point to an unprejudiced by-ſtander, a foreigner, but no ſtranger to the church of England, nor to the objections made againſt her by our own countrymen. D. E. Jablonſki writes to Dr. Nicholls from Berlin, Jan. 10, 1708, to this purpoſe. 'I ſpent my youth in Pruſſia and Poland, among 'Britiſh ſubjects, who were averſe from the 'church of England, and had been parties in the 'diſputes betwixt the Epiſcopalians and Preſby-'terians. . . . . Converſe with them had filled 'my tender mind with ſuch prejudices againſt 'your church, that when I came a young man 'into England, in 1680, I had an utter abhor-'rence of it, and thought her publick places of 'worſhip were as much to be avoided as thoſe of 'the papiſts. Soon after, in endeavouring to 'learn the language, I happened on the XXXIX 'Articles; the pure orthodoxy of which I ſo ap-'proved of, that, doubting of my former opi-'nion, I more cloſely examined the whole con-'troverſy; your eccleſiaſtical conſtitution, your 'liturgy, the objections made to each, and the 'whole foundation of the ſchiſm.

'The longer I communicated with that church, 'the more I grew confirmed in the opinion that 'her articles had no heterodoxy, her liturgy no 'idolatry or ſuperſtition, her government much

'good

'good order and decency: and that on this account, among all the reformed churches, she 'came neareſt to the pattern of the primitive 'church, and was deſervedly eſteemed the brighteſt 'ſtar in the Chriſtian heaven, the chief glory of 'the reformation, and the ſecureſt defence of the 'goſpel againſt popery; and that no one can re'fuſe her communion without ſchiſm.

'Yet I ſo follow and honor the church of 'England, as not to hate, but pity, your Preſ'byterians; the greater part of whom, I believe, 'trained up in hereditary prejudices, act with 'a good conſcience; but that ſome amongſt 'them abuſe the ſimplicity of the reſt.' [a]

And

[a] Pueritiam meam in Pruſſiâ et Poloniâ contrivi Britannos inter homines ab eccleſiâ Anglicanâ alienos; qui cum in patriâ certaminum Epiſcopales inter et Preſbyterianos aliquando pars fuiſſent, poſt, patriâ extorres, cœtus noſtros dictis in locis auxerant, ſeverâ plerumque pietate conſpicui. Jùge cum viris iſtis commercium tenellum animum tantis adverſus eccleſiam veſtram præjudiciis oppleverat, ut cum juvenis Angliam ingrederer (anno 1680) eccleſiam Anglicanam toto pectore horrerem, ejuſque templa haud ſecus ac Pontificiorum devitanda eſſe cenſerem. Mox addiſcendæ linguæ dum incumbo, in XXXIX eccleſiæ Anglicanæ articulos incido, qui cum intemeratâ ſuâ orthodoxiâ mihi ſe probarent, priſtinæ ſententiæ nonnihil dubius, rem omnem penitius trutinandam mihi ſumo; conſtitutionem eccleſiæ, rationem cultûs Divini, prætenſos utriuſque nævos, omneque ſchiſmatis fundamentum, quantâ poſſum diligentiâ ad examen revoco.

Quo autem diutius eccleſiæ Anglicanæ communione uſus ſum, magis magiſque in eâ ſententiâ confirmatus fui, libros ejus ſymbolicos nihil habere heterodoxiæ, cultum nihil idololatriæ vel ſuperſtitionis, hierarchiam verò ordinis et decoris plurimum: eamque hoc nomine inter omnes eccleſias reformatas ad exemplar eccleſiæ primitivæ proximè accedere, meritòque audire ſydus in cœlo Chriſtiano lucidiſſimum, decus reformationis primarium, et evangelii adverſus papatum propugnaculum firmiſſimum, cujus communionem abſque ſchiſmatis notâ aſpernari poſſit nemo.

Ita

And ſurely if the church of England is not out of conceit with any part either of her doctrines or diſcipline, as ſhe ſeems in the judgements of unprejudiced by-ſtanders to have no cauſe to be, there can be no neceſſity for her to alter her articles or ſubſcription: though I will not deny, nor I believe have the ſtricteſt churchmen ever denied, that ſome of them might be more accurately and unexceptionably expreſſed. I wiſh they who have written againſt our church would have been, or would learn to be, equally candid in their allowances. But ſurely there is no need to pull down all theſe fences, and let in the errors of Papiſts, Anabaptiſts, Arians, Socinians, Fataliſts, Free-willers, Quakers, &c. ſome of which are not only contrary to the goſpel truths, but dangerous to the commonwealth. I know that you and your friends ſometimes ſpeak as if you would find means of excluding papiſts; yet why they alone are to be excluded I cannot underſtand: But at other times, as in pag. 201. you would have endeavours uſed to agree upon a form of words, which *every* Chriſtian miniſter may ſubſcribe willingly; and this includes papiſts as well as others. You take great pains to accuſe your brethren of favoring and promoting popery. Whether this project of yours would not promote it more, than all you can poſſibly charge them with, I leave, not to your own conſideration, though heartily wiſhing that you were in a fitter ſtate

Ita autem eccleſiam Anglicanam colo et veneror, ut Preſbyterianos veſtros non tam odio quam commiſeratione proſequor. Exiſtimo enim majorem eorum partem, avitis præjudiciis imbutos, bonâ fide agere; minorem, reliquorum ſimplicitate abuti. — Relation des meſures qui furent priſes dans les années 1711, 12, 13, pour introduire la liturgie Anglicane dans le Royaume de Pruſſe et dans electorat de Hanover, p. 46, 47.

ſtate of mind for it, but to that of your readers.

The papiſt would alſo find his account in it, if you could perſuade us, that *a good and conſcientious Chriſtian in matters of practice, can do little harm by his miſtaken opinions.*[b] But to whom do you allow the benefit of this title? In one ſenſe, the Phariſee Saul was, in matters of practice, a good conſcientious Jew: Queen Mary the firſt, a good conſcientious popiſh Chriſtian: archbiſhop Laud, a good conſcientious high church Chriſtian: yet they did great harm by their miſtaken opinions. And ſuppoſing perſons were not to practice according to their miſtaken opinions, which, however, good conſcientious perſons in moſt caſes will; yet publiſhing their opinions, or even not oppoſing miſtakes, may do much hurt: if popiſh doctrines will *do little harm*, why are you ſo zealous againſt popery? If an Antinomian, who thinks the groſſeſt ſins will not exclude one, who hath once been a true believer, from heaven, though he die in them, ſhould yet lead a pious and virtuous life from a principle of gratitude, or any other, may not his followers *be far miſled* by his notions? I apprehend there is no one article of Chriſtian faith, but hath ſome tendency to purify either the life or the heart of him who believes it: and therefore proviſion ſhould be made, as far as it can without inconvenience, for teaching them all. But *a conſcientious miſtaken Chriſtian*, you ſay, *may poſſibly be a more edifying teacher in points of the utmoſt importance, concerning which, few are liable to err, than he who is warmed with the moſt ſublimed ſpirit of orthodoxy.*[c] And do you really think few are liable to err about points of the utmoſt

[b] Confeſſ. p. 197. [c] Page 198.

utmoſt importance? Are the Papiſts, are thoſe againſt whom your book is written, but few? And do you not take them to err in points of the utmoſt importance? I and many others may think thoſe points ſo, which you do not: and you may ridicule us as *warmed by the moſt ſublimed ſpirit of orthodoxy*, while we are only *contending earneſtly*, as the ſcripture bids us, *for the truth once delivered to the ſaints*, Jude ver. 3. Speak ſincerely: would not you exclude us, if you could, from being publick teachers? Why then may not we endeavour to exclude you? It is doubtleſs poſſible, that a teacher, who errs in ſome points, may be more edifying in many or moſt, than one who thinks more juſtly. But the reverſe is not only poſſible, but in general probable, and in fact, often certain. An orthodox man may be an uncharitable zealot; but he may alſo be full of benevolence, *in meekneſs inſtructing thoſe who oppoſe themſelves*, 2 Tim. ii. 25. A heterodox man may be mild and gentle: but he may alſo be furious and malicious: his errors may be innocent and unlikely to ſpread; or they may be ſuch as will *increaſe unto more ungodlineſs, and eat as doth a canker*, 2 Tim. ii. 16, 17. If therefore you mean to put every honeſt man who preaches falſe doctrine upon a level with every honeſt man who preaches truth, we cannot think you one of thoſe *good conſcientious Chriſtians, who can do no harm by their miſtaken opinions.* And if doctrines are to be diſtinguiſhed, and a guard ſet againſt dangerous ones, why is not ſubſcription a proper guard?

Let ſuch a one alone, ſay you, *to follow his conſcience, and he will be ſincere, faithful, and diligent in diſpenſing the word of God, according to his beſt information.*

information.[d] But the more diligent such a one is in dispensing the word of God, according to *his* best information, the more harm he will do. Let the papist alone to follow his conscience, and he will be diligent to stir the people up to rebellion against (as he esteems him) his heretical and excommunicated King: let the Anabaptist alone to follow his mistaken opinions, which he calls his conscience, and he will be diligent in taking the riches and goods of the right owners, and dispensing them to his followers.

But, as you procede, *if you have a mind to make a knave of him, you cannot take a more effectual method, than to contrive tests for his disputable opinions.*[e] Really, sir, *the man of principle, and good conscientious Christian*, as you have described him, claiming a right to prevaricate when he thinks others do it (at p. 192.); and using quirks and subtleties, when he finds himself bound by what he fancies unreasonable and unrighteous conditions, (at p. 197.) is knave enough in all conscience already. The utmost harm you can do him, is to make him *externally* an honester man; by bringing him under further obligations to be a dutiful subject, and to make him refrain from invading other peoples property.

In answer to your scoff at the close of this chapter,[f] permit me to render good for evil. I grudge you not the fruits of your *insurance-office* for your preferment: but however you may trifle or prevaricate with *men*, I beseech you mock not *God:* take heed of making a solemn confession of faith to him, which you do not believe; and a solemn promise to your governours, which you are determined not to keep. Your conscience,

[d] Confess. p. 198.
[e] Ibid.
[f] Confess. p. 201.

conſcience, God be thanked! ſeems not quite ſeered, by the reſtleſſneſs of it. But what kind of conſolation can you receive from an aſſurance (if ſuch could *truely* be had) that the clergy in general prevaricate as much as yourſelf? The wiſhing it to be ſo, and the charging it on the clergy without proof, ſhew nothing of a Chriſtian temper. *Search the ſcriptures*, examine yourſelf; and God give you a right underſtanding in all things.

I am, Rev. Sir,

Your Well-wiſher, &c.

FINIS.

MVSEVM BRITAN NICVM